



Warrington Borough Council  
Local Development Framework

Core Strategy Refined Vision Consultation  
January 2010





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# Introduction

The Borough Council consulted on a Draft Issues and Options Report in early 2009. Through the consultation <sup>(1)</sup> it has become apparent that the Council and its key stakeholders need a much clearer, Warrington-specific vision of how the Borough will develop over the next 15 years, to work towards through the management of development and the setting of programmes and priorities.

The key issues and "building blocks" identified in the initial Issues and Options report have therefore been refined, and they now form the subject of this more detailed draft vision. A "building block" is an area of Warrington that has been identified as having certain characteristics and which will require a distinct policy approach. These areas are shown on the plan at the start of the Building Blocks section. Each of the key issues and areas has been considered in terms of its past, present and future. This allows a much greater place specific, more accessible understanding of how the issue or area has developed over time, and how it could be shaped in the future. Whilst this may result in a lengthy vision, it will be more place specific and relevant, to give a clearer steer for development in Warrington.

The Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework needs to reflect the Local Strategy Partnership Sustainable Community Strategy aspirations spatially. This means that the Core Strategy picks up the 'One Warrington – One Future' vision and relates it to actual places and sites because it will set the legal framework with respect to land and development and will be used to determine what actually happens in terms of bricks and mortar or landscape.

In summary the Core Strategy:

- Creates a framework to guide regeneration through public and private investment in order to promote economic environmental and social well-being for Warrington.
- Co-ordinates and delivers the public sector components of this vision with other agencies and processes.

This document is provided for discussion in the quest to develop a shared vision which will form the basis for setting the objectives and identifying options for policy development that will follow in the next few months. It should be stressed that this process could lead to redrafting, refinement and further detail being added to the elements of the vision before it is agreed in its final form.

There is now an opportunity to influence and comment on these elements of the vision before further work is carried out. We will publish our draft objectives and options for realising the draft vision for consideration in February of this year, so there are opportunities for anyone to be continually involved in the drafting process. Once the vision, objectives and options are finalised, and a process of assessment and appraisal (including Sustainability Appraisal and Environmental Assessment) has taken place we will informally consult on our preferred option in April 2010. A draft Core Strategy will be available for formal public consultation in September 2010.

We would appreciate any comments or input that you would have on any part of the vision set out in this document. If possible please submit comments via our consultation portal:

**<http://warrington-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal>**

Alternatively you may prefer to email us at: **[ldf@warrington.gov.uk](mailto:ldf@warrington.gov.uk)**, or

Write to us at: **Planning Policy, Environment and Regeneration Directorate, New Town House, Buttermarket Street, Warrington, WA1 2NH**

Or call us on: **(01925) 442799** to discuss.

Whilst there is no formal deadline for this informal consultation, we would appreciate submission of comments over the next three weeks. We will, of course, continue to take into account any comments submitted after this time.

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<sup>1</sup> The report of consultation can be found at:  
<http://warrington-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal/planning/cs/issuesoptions/csiorep>.

# Where is Warrington?



## Past

Warrington was a medium size industrial town with little to distinguish it from other towns in the sub-region.

The town was within the administrative area of Cheshire, but had functional links with Liverpool, Manchester and South Lancashire.

There was rapid expansion of Warrington's urban area – due to the planned growth of Warrington New Town

## Present

Warrington is now one of the most successful towns in the country and a significant player in the regional and sub-regional economy.

Warrington is a Unitary Authority, is part of the Manchester and Liverpool City Regions as defined by the North West Regional Spatial Strategy and has employment and housing links with mid Mersey authorities and north Cheshire. Regional positioning is complicated.

The Regional Spatial Strategy positions Warrington at 3<sup>rd</sup> level priority for locating development after Regional Centres of Manchester and Liverpool and their surrounding inner areas. (Policy RDF1)

Warrington Town Centre is part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> tier in the regional retail hierarchy behind Manchester / Salford and Liverpool City Centres (Policy W5).

Growth in Warrington has been re-focused on regeneration of the older parts of the town (Policies RDF1 & MCR5), but some residual new town 'legacy' sites remain to be developed.

## Vision - In 2026.....

Warrington has grown in a sustainable, low carbon way through additional housing and economic development and performs valuable roles for different regional, sub-regional and local geographies:

- The borough functions as part of the wider Manchester and Liverpool City Regions, and is well located in relation to national transport infrastructure which offers many locational advantages for businesses.
- As part of the Cheshire and Warrington sub-region the borough continues to generate a significant amount of the Northwest's economic output and provides a highly skilled workforce that helps drive the economies of the Manchester and Liverpool City Regions.
- Warrington Borough is a sub-regional focus of employment for a wide area including Knowsley, Halton, St Helens and Wigan and functions alongside Halton and St Helens as the mid Mersey housing market area.
- The town centre is a focus for the surrounding population and the growth and improvement of the inner parts of Warrington has resulted in Warrington Town Centre maintaining its status and position in the regional hierarchy.

Growth within Warrington has focused on sites accessible by public transport, walking and cycling and has supported regeneration and restructuring of inner Warrington. The majority of development in the borough has been on brownfield sites.



# Housing

## Past

Warrington's growth was governed by the activities of the New Town Development Corporation and housing development achieved by the outward expansion of the town. The continued success of the area as a location for development brought development pressure to all other settlements in the borough. Green Belt boundaries were not yet determined, so outward expansion of settlements remained a possibility.

The mix and type of housing provided was determined by the market.

Affordable housing was provided by public sector rented housing programmes.

## Present

Outward growth of the town and other settlements has been arrested by establishment of Green Belt boundaries. Housing growth has been successfully re-directed into the regeneration of the older areas of Warrington. The Regional Spatial Strategy housing requirement figures have been exceeded and a deliverable supply of new homes is in place to meet the growth agenda.

A housing needs assessment has been carried out in order to ascertain the quantity, size, type and tenure likely to be required to meet future need. The mix and type of housing provided is still largely governed by the market as existing planning permissions are implemented.

Affordable housing is provided by negotiation within qualifying private sector housing developments, supported by Registered Social Landlords and the Borough Council.

## Vision - In 2026.....

The continued identification of a flexible and responsive supply of land has resulted in the delivery of the level of new homes needed to achieve RSS requirements and the growth agenda, with no alteration to the Green Belt.

Whilst housing growth has been prioritised to secure the successful regeneration of Inner Warrington alongside meeting identified needs, opportunities have been taken elsewhere within the Borough where needed to secure a more balanced housing offer with increased choice, affordability and equality for Warrington's residents.

The supply of affordable housing has been boosted by enhanced public sector provision alongside that secured, where viable, from qualifying private sector developments.

The permanent and transit accommodation needs of the Gypsy and Traveller and Travelling Showpeople communities have been met.



## Past

There has been a historic reliance on manufacturing industries including chemicals, steel & wire, brewing, and tanning. Inner area industrial sites were assembled and let by the Council (eg Farrell Street, Bewsey, and Gatewarth) but major office locations were provided by the New Town at well serviced, large sites close to motorway junctions at the outskirts of the town eg Birchwood Park.

Periodic reviews of employment land supply were undertaken to identify sites proving unattractive to the market and suggest availability for other uses.

There was a lack of coordinated and integrated provision of further education, employment and training – separate institutions in separate locations, with poor links to local business.

Warrington was not seen as a visitor destination to people outside the borough.

## Present

A more diverse economy is established embracing distribution, new technologies, and financial services; particularly in locations such as Woolston, Birchwood and Lingley Mere.

A forward supply of employment land is identified to 2016 (in line with UDP provision) made up of residual New Town sites (primarily Omega) and key private sector sites (primarily Birchwood Park). The Regional Spatial Strategy suggests an oversupply of employment land in Cheshire & Warrington as a whole. In response to the stated oversupply and other economic factors it is appropriate to review the role of Omega against RSS Policy W2 and if necessary other suitable uses may be considered for the site.

The need to address inequalities and sustainability mean the priority is to improve access to peripheral employment sites by walking, cycling and public transport and provide local opportunities for employment in accessible locations.

There has been greater integration of further education through unification under Chester University, with improved working with employers. Provision is still fragmented across several sites.

Sites such as Walton Hall, Sankey Valley and the town centre Waterfront have been identified which have the potential to contribute further to the visitor economy.

## Vision - In 2026.....

Warrington is meeting the needs of businesses, including service sectors (finance and business services and public administration), the knowledge economy and manufacturing sectors through the provision of a supply of high quality sites and a skilled population. Economic performance has improved in the borough over the last 15 years.

Employment opportunities in central, accessible locations such as Bridge Street, Centre Park and the Wireworks have been brought forward which complement the continued success of the longer standing peripheral sites such as Birchwood Park, and bring more vitality to the town centre.

The forward supply of high quality sites remains healthy and has been maintained for the period up to 2026, leading to continued investment in the borough and the provision of quality and attractive employment opportunities. The borough is developing a qualified & skilled workforce through integration with employers and local businesses.

The visitor economy in the borough is expanding as people from outside of the borough are drawn to key attractions and to stay longer in the borough.



# Sustainability and Climate Change

## Past

Sustainability and climate change were not issues for consideration in the past. Flood risk was an incidental issue rather than a key consideration.

## Present

Sustainability and climate change are now very high profile issues at all levels of governance. The Council has adopted a Climate Change Strategy but comprehensive policies to implement this through the planning system are not in place.

Climate Change and recent weather events across the country have brought the need to reduce our carbon footprint to centre stage. There is no significant renewable energy generation in Warrington but research has been commissioned to investigate the scope for more. Large areas of Warrington, concentrated in the centre of town, are subject to fluvial, tidal and surface water flooding.

## Vision - in 2026.....

The borough's carbon footprint has reduced. The design and layout of development is influenced by climate change considerations and new development is generating a proportion of its energy needs from renewable sources. Energy efficiency has improved through higher standards of construction, improvements to existing buildings and changes in travel modes and patterns.

The borough is exercising careful stewardship of the natural environment and has acted to safeguard vital natural resources including water, air, and soil.

All development proposals are fully assessed using the information in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, and inappropriate developments are refused planning permission. Flood risk within existing developments has been reduced and all new development is flood resistant and resilient, where necessary.



## Past

Warrington emerged as a market town and was therefore a draw to the surrounding area. The town centre was focused on the crossing of the East – West route between Manchester and Liverpool and the North – South route using the crossing over the Mersey.

The New Town approach to planning dispersed uses away from the Town Centre, so dispersed traffic across the town. However the planned New Town highway network did not anticipate the high levels of traffic that have materialised and was never completed.

There was rudimentary consideration of access issues but the presumption was that the use of private cars would continue to be the main means of private travel, with less consideration given to public transport and walking or cycling. The usual response to congestion was to increase road capacity by widening or new road construction.

## Present

Warrington is surrounded by the Strategic Road Network (M62, M6, M56) and serves as a regional transport hub for roads and rail.

Congestion is cited as a major problem by residents and businesses in Warrington and the economic success of the Borough has led to higher than average levels of car ownership and use. There are significant levels of commuting in and out of the Borough, and journey origins and destinations are diverse. Congestion is also influenced by external factors, such as incidents on the motorway and use of the town's ship canal swing bridges.

The New Town's dispersed development patterns have increased the need to travel and public transport usage is low. Relatively few people walk to work. Pedestrian and cycle networks are incomplete. The quality and accessibility of rail stations is poor within the Borough. There is generally a low level of bus service in evenings and on Sundays. There are no orbital or cross-town bus services, which mean that cross-town journeys require interchange, with consequent time and fare penalties.

The New Town legacy has meant that many jobs, facilities and activities are dispersed and are in out-of-town locations, making them more difficult to reach without a car, especially from deprived central wards.

A number of the more peripheral affluent wards have a high proportion of people over the age of 65. In the future these people are less likely to be independently car-mobile, which may become a problem as these distant areas are less well connected to facilities by public transport.

The current approach is to use demand management and encourage the transfer of personal trips away from private cars to walking, cycling, or public transport, and of freight from road to rail or canal.

## Vision - In 2026.....

Warrington has built on its strong roots as a regional transport hub. The town is easy for everyone to get to and to get around, with an integrated transport system providing realistic and reliable alternatives to using cars including park & ride, public transport, walking and cycling.

Development has been guided towards more sustainable locations and congestion has been reduced through demand management measures which have encouraged people to use modes of transport other than the car where possible.

The Manchester Ship Canal and railway infrastructure are vital for the movement of freight.



# Warrington's Centres

## Past

Warrington is an historic market town with a long relationship with the river and canals and is an important bridging point across the Mersey. The town centre and the market is the main focus point for the borough. The town centre is compact and industry forms a 'collar' around it restricting the scope for expansion.

New town development brought large scale district centres, and extensive out-of-centre developments that threatened to undermine the success of the town centre.

Traditional local centres were the heart of close knit local communities offering a full range of day to day needs including fresh food. Newer local centres were planned to continue this tradition in the new town areas.

## Present

Warrington serves as a sub-regional centre, secondary to the city centres of Liverpool and Manchester. Locally, it is complemented by district centres at Westbrook, Birchwood, and Stockton Heath as well as neighbourhood and local centres that each perform a range of functions.

There has been major investment in Golden Square but across the town centre as a whole there is a limited range of uses. Some town centre areas such as Bridge Street have lower environmental quality than other areas of town with high unit vacancies.

The decline of industry around the town centre has led to the availability of sites that could contribute more positively to the town centre.

All centres have become more service oriented as mobility and large supermarkets have led to bulk shopping with less reliance on local shops on a day-to-day basis.

## Vision - in 2026.....

The town centre has maintained its position in the regional hierarchy and is a successful, competitive sub-regional centre.

The town centre is accessible and attractive and is the focus of the borough for retail, leisure, culture, entertainment and business. Comparison retailing in the centre is underpinned by an attractive retail offer in Golden Square. This is complemented by a wider mix of uses including convenience retail in newly regenerated areas around Bridge Street. Beyond the retail core, the centre is enhanced by renewed fringe and gateway areas which have become integrated more effectively with the town centre. The centre provides plenty to do and see for people of all ages and interests throughout the day

There is an appropriate hierarchy of centres across the borough that perform different roles, from community hubs to a local source of fresh food.



## Past

A typical northern industrial town, characterised by 'smoke and chimneys'. Terraced housing stood cheek by jowl with heavy manufacturing industry. The River Mersey, the canals (including Manchester Ship Canal) and the railway network were of vital importance to the town's economic success.

The surrounding villages functioned as part of the countryside economy, local settlements based on the parish church and primary school.

Ribbon development on the main radial roads heralded the start of suburban sprawl. Development as part of the new town brought contrast between the density and character of the modern areas and the older town.

Protection was extended only to Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas. There was little control over development and no specific design policies.

## Present

Warrington is now in a transitional stage, changing from the "cloth cap" factory town born out of the Industrial Revolution into a modern centre for high technology industry. The contrast between the character of the older town and the outer areas is still marked.

The strategic position on the road / motorway network has played a major part in attracting new industry and the current prosperity of the town. Rail and canal play lesser roles.

New residential developments have replaced many of the older industrial areas around the town centre

Protection is now also afforded to buildings of local importance and archaeological sites. Design policies are in place, but not applied pro-actively through promotion of good practice or offer of design guidance.

## Vision - in 2026.....

Warrington is a modern, attractive place. Approaches and gateways to the town are improved, and the River Mersey waterfront is a place worth visiting. Those visiting Warrington, as well as residents, are pleased by the quality of neighbourhoods, key gateways and routes into the borough and the town and district centres. Open spaces and the public realm is well maintained

Protection of the built environment is maintained and supplemented by a programme of managed enhancements to Conservation Areas. The need for good design is central to the management of development in the borough and 'design' is embraced in a holistic way that embraces sustainable construction, public art, crime prevention and waste minimisation / management. There is attention to detail and good design in all new development. The unique elements of the built and natural environment that Warrington possesses are well managed and looked after.



# Green Infrastructure

## Past

Environmental assets were protected but were seen as separate elements rather than as part of an integrated network. The concept of green infrastructure and its multi-functional value was not recognised.

Green Belt boundaries had not been established and the countryside was under threat from development.

## Present

An effective suite of protection policies are set out as individual and unrelated elements of the Unitary Development Plan. Protection extends to areas of nature conservation, amenity and recreational value. The Greenway Network designation acknowledges the links between separate elements and identifies the underlying structure of canals, rivers and other corridors.

The protection of the countryside afforded by the Green Belt is complemented by the protection of green spaces in the built up areas.

## Vision - in 2026.....

The borough's natural assets have been identified, protected and enhanced as part of an integrated multi-functional network of green spaces, rivers, canals and green corridors. Important habitats and species have been identified and protected.

Provision has been made for new elements and enhancements of green infrastructure within new developments and a programme for the enhancement of existing green spaces is in operation.



## Past

Waste recycling initiatives were limited . There was no pro-active waste minimisation or reduction strategy. Several significant landfill sites were in active use across the borough receiving substantial quantities of municipal, commercial and industrial wastes from outside the Borough.

Mining from Parkside and Bold collieries had extended beneath substantial parts of north Warrington.

The Borough contributed on a limited scale to the extraction of aggregates in terms of sandstone, and sand / gravel. Clay was extracted for many years for both brick making and landfill site engineering.

The Borough had limited provision of secondary aggregates.

## Present

Increasing efforts to promote waste minimisation, recycling and re-use are beginning to take effect. However, the Authority continues to send substantial quantities of waste to landfill and there are also significant volumes of waste imported into the Borough for landfill.

There are no active coal workings at the present time nor any envisaged in future.

The Borough contains an active sandstone quarry but there are no current sand and gravel extraction sites. Clay continues to be extracted for both brick making and landfill engineering.

The Borough lies within the licensed area for the potential exploitation of coal bed methane with one active well site in operation.

## Vision - in 2026.....

The Borough has sufficient facilities to meet its own waste management needs including landfill capacity.

A waste treatment facility to manage residual municipal waste generated within the Borough is operational.

Quantities of municipal, commercial and industrial wastes imported into the Borough have been significantly reduced whilst still having regard to regional and sub regional needs for waste management facilities.

The only wastes sent to landfill constitute residual waste with no further potential for recycling or re-use.

Viable mineral deposits have been identified and protected so that they are not sterilised by development.

Mineral development is only taking place in an environmentally acceptable manner.



# Inequalities

## Past

No particular recognition given to equality as an issue

## Present

Areas of deprivation have been identified and a start has been made to tackling the issues. There is widespread recognition of the needs of minority groups.

Unemployment in the most disadvantaged wards is around twice the Warrington average with the disadvantage most prevalent in the inner wards, although there are pockets elsewhere in the borough. Parts of Inner wards also suffer from deprivation relating to income, health, disability, education, skills, training, crime and living environment.

Other forms of deprivation are evident in the outer areas, for example access to housing and services.

## Vision - in 2026.....

Worklessness in the borough is at a low level. Local residents are better equipped with the skills required to take up employment and training opportunities created in the district and sub-region.

Growth has reinforced existing neighbourhoods and has provided high quality, safe, secure and inclusive living environments that meet residents needs and encourages healthy lifestyles.

Disparities and inequalities that existed across the borough have been significantly reduced.

There is equality of opportunity regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, socio-economic status, age, religious beliefs, political beliefs, or other ideologies and cultural differences. There is understanding that each individual is unique and recognition and respect for individual differences.

The importance of addressing the needs of older people, vulnerable people and children and young people is being acted upon.



## Past

Limited regard was had to health impacts of plans and strategies, but there may have been indirect benefits to health through amenity-led policies for open space, pollution, noise, air-quality etc.

Limited consideration was given to Crime Prevention.

## Present

There is increasing concern over the state of the nation's health e.g. obesity, and greater recognition of the influence that plans may have on health.

Health is improving in Warrington but obesity and the ageing population are particular local concerns. Health disparities mean that life expectancy in the most deprived wards is around 9 years less than in more affluent areas.

Coordination between local authority and PCT services is improving.

There is greater recognition of the role that good design has in creating safe and secure environments.

## Vision - in 2026.....

Health inequalities across the borough have been narrowed and people in Warrington are at least as healthy as the national average.

The majority of elderly and vulnerable people are able to live independently. All proposals and policies have been appraised to ensure health benefits are maximised and adverse impacts avoided.

Design guidance incorporating specific advice on crime reduction has been published and kept up to date.



# The Building Blocks

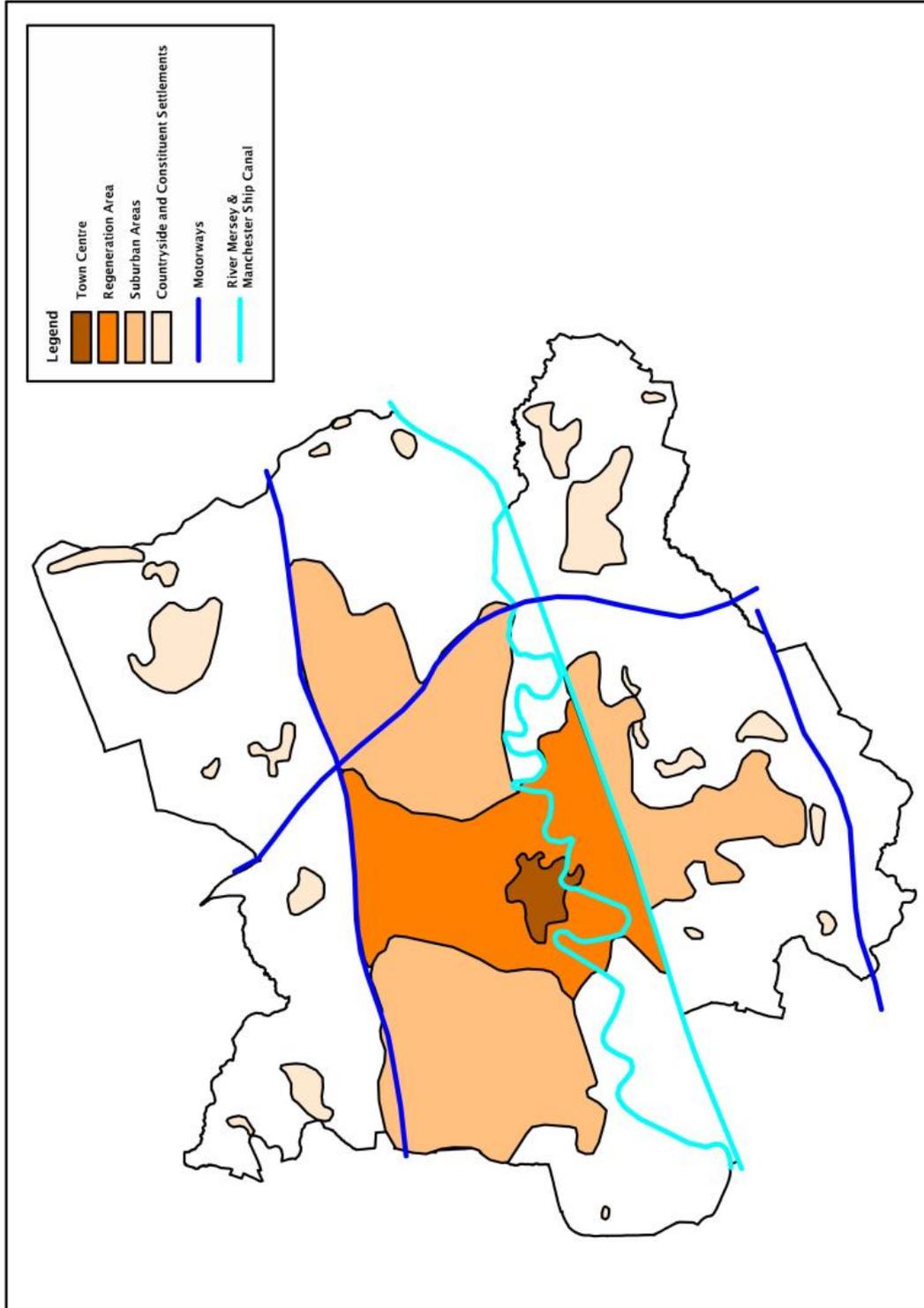


Figure shows the areas of Warrington that have been identified as having different characteristics and which will require a distinct policy approach.



## Past

The town centre was an important focus for the immediate area due to the market and its location on the meeting of East – West and North – South routes. There was a wide range of other uses in the town centre including public baths, cinemas and a theatre. The centre's success was threatened by planned decentralisation of the new town to large scale district centres, and extensive out-of-centre developments.

The retail core of the town centre is surrounded by busy mixed use areas, comprising homes, heavy industry, and commerce

## Present

There has been major investment in Golden Square but the wider town centre offers a limited range of uses. There is no cinema and a lack of diversity in the evening economy. While the public realm is attractive in some areas, linkages between key parts of the town centre are not always obvious.

Some areas around the retail core suffer from a run-down environment, with vacant sites or buildings. Some areas are used for parking, but there is still some business activity including edge-of-centre retail with extensive parking, and premises converted/subdivided for re-use.

## Vision - in 2026.....

The town centre is accessible, safe and attractive, the vibrant focus of the borough for retail, leisure, culture, entertainment and business. It provides plenty to do and see for people of all ages and interests throughout the day.

Golden Square continues to underpin an attractive retail offer which is complemented by a wider mix of uses in newly regenerated areas around Bridge Street. Market Gate and the old Fish Market provide a focus of activity in the town.

Areas around the retail core of the town centre are characterised by high quality development providing homes and jobs, and opportunities for business, leisure and entertainment. There are safe, well-marked and attractive links into the centre from key locations including the Halliwell Jones Stadium, Bank Quay Station, the Cockhedge Centre, Centre Park and the Wireworks. Bank Park is a well used, valuable asset for the town centre.

The town centre has expanded to accommodate a wider range of uses. Delivery of the Arpley Chord has meant that the physical links between the town centre and the waterfront areas are much improved.

The approach gateways to the town centre along the primary radial routes including the A49 and A57 are characterised by attractive buildings, green spaces and landscapes, and an improved public realm through a combination of redevelopment and enhancement.



# Regeneration Area

## Past

The area was home to an ageing population housed in substandard terraced housing, with some areas of unfit housing with no basic amenities. The area suffered from a poor environment with little or no open space. There were, however, strong communities based on local social and family networks, the local church and school, and long length of residence.

The area had heavy industry with jobs on the doorstep, but this also resulted in poor air quality.

Corner shops and local centres met local residents everyday shopping needs.

## Present

There is a more balanced population, with most of the unfit housing replaced or renovated. Extensive new housing developments have changed the face of some areas including Carrington Park. There are more dispersed social and family networks, and there is a much greater turnover in occupancy.

High levels of multiple deprivation are concentrated in the inner wards especially relating to income, employment, health and disability, education, skills and training, crime and living environment.

The nearby heavy industry has largely disappeared, but this has also taken away access to local jobs. Employment is now primarily in services & retail parks and may be in less accessible locations.

There are far fewer corner shops and some local centres have changed character as new supermarkets (Sainsbury's, Tesco and Cockhedge Asda as well as Lidl and Aldi) have emerged to dominate the food shopping scene.

## Vision - in 2026.....

The regeneration area has been the focus of housing provision and development over the last 15 years and the area has benefited as a result. The older parts of the town have been regenerated as popular and attractive places to live with easy access to local jobs and services. There are good local facilities and open spaces that link to a wider walking and cycling network of green infrastructure, which is beneficial for health and recreational purposes. Improvements to the area and its links to other areas have meant that environmental, accessibility, and quality of life disparities have been reduced. A 'Homes for life' approach to providing new housing in this area has meant that there is less need to move out of the area as family needs and aspirations change.

Brownfield housing opportunities within the regeneration area are continuing to emerge but are at a low level, and opportunities presented by larger Greenfield sites such as Peel Hall are being examined.

The A49 corridor has been renewed and improved to provide new employment opportunities and an improved appearance. The A49 is less congested and public transport provides a high quality service thanks to a successful park & ride scheme and bus priority measures.

Sankey Valley Park has an enhanced role as a popular visitor attraction, and is a core element of the borough's green infrastructure with strong links to the Mersey Valley corridor and the Green Belt around Warrington.

The wider waterfront area is being considered for development and infrastructure is being assessed and put into place.



## Past

Penketh and Great Sankey developed as fingers of suburban sprawl along radial roads and rail lines. There was no co-ordinated provision of local shops, services and community facilities although Honiton Square was added in 70's and other local centres have developed along main roads..

'Westbrook' was identified as one of the major New Town growth areas with extensive employment and housing areas focused on the reclamation and redevelopment of the massive RAF Burtonwood that dominated the north west sector of this area . In the absence of defined Green Belt boundaries there were considerable pressures for outward expansion westwards into the narrow gap between Warrington and Widnes.

## Present

Extensive areas of housing have been developed at Callands, Whittle Brook, Old Hall and Kingswood and a successful business area has been established at Gemini. There are some residual sites available for development near Westbrook Centre, which in essence comprises a cinema and an Asda store as the main centre for the District.

Westbrook centre is complemented by a network of local shops in each neighbourhood together with a primary school. As a result of more relaxed retail planning and New Town permissions Gemini has also developed as a popular retail destination with large out of centre stores including Ikea and Marks and Spencer. Commuting into and out of the area is facilitated by good connections to the M62. There are significant issues relating to traffic congestion, especially at peak hours and weekends.

Omega employment site was established on the last remaining area of the former airfield but apart from some infrastructure provision substantial development has not yet taken place. There is still significant housing development to be completed at Chapelford and Dawson House.

Gullivers World is a popular visitor attraction, but provides mainly for day trips although there is currently consent for a hotel to provide some overnight accommodation.

Green Belt boundaries have been established.

## Vision - in 2026.....

Employment development has advanced at Omega and is a model of good design and sustainability. A clear framework for the development of the whole site in the longer term is in place which allows for appropriate development. The site has excellent public transport links and traffic impacts on the local and strategic road networks are being well managed. Gemini continues to be a successful business location.

Chapelford has been completed and provides a mix of house sizes and types, including affordable housing, in a safe, high quality environment. The railway station is operating successfully and is linked to Omega by a bus service, and cycle and pedestrian routes.

The new neighbourhood centre at Chapelford provides a local hub for the community with health services, a primary school and local shop, and complements the existing network of local centres. Westbrook centre continues to provide for the wider area as a whole.

Sankey Valley Park has an enhanced role as a popular visitor attraction, and as a core element of the borough's green infrastructure.



# East Warrington

## Past

Woolston, Bruche and Padgate developed along radial routes into the town and the rail line. Housing was mostly speculative private housing across Bruche and Woolston, but there were also large public sector schemes at Padgate & Blackbrook. The area had extensive areas of military dereliction including Padgate Camp, Risley Munitions Depot and the former Royal Ordnance Factory but New Town developments at Birchwood and Oakwood reclaimed all former dereliction.

## Present

The M6 forms a clear Green Belt boundary at the edge of the town east of Woolston. Major employment areas are established at Woolston Grange, Birchwood Park, Risley, and Longbarn.

Birchwood Park offers a high quality business environment with a number of supporting services and facilities. It has capacity for further development, as does Longbarn (Olympic Park).

Extensive residential areas have been developed at Longbarn, Oakwood, Locking Stumps, & Gorse Covert. The closure of Woolston High School has been announced.

Woolston Leisure Centre is a popular venue but is in need of investment in repair and improvement.

The former Police Training Centre at Bruche is available for housing redevelopment following purchase by the Homes and Communities Agency, but overall there is limited capacity in the area for further development. Pockets of deprivation exist notably at Oakwood.

Birchwood District centre is established as a focus of a wide range of shops and services, complemented by a network of local centres in residential neighbourhoods.

## Vision - in 2026.....

In contrast to the scale of change experienced in the New Town era, East Warrington has not changed significantly in the last 15 years. Birchwood Park has been completed and has maintained high standards of design and landscape, providing an attractive business environment.

Opportunities for the re-use and redevelopment of sites within established employment areas at Risley and Woolston Grange continue to arise and these opportunities to incrementally improve the image, appearance, and accessibility of these areas are guided by local Masterplans.

The former Bruche Training Centre has been successfully developed and now provides market and affordable housing in a high quality sustainable environment.

The area benefits from improved public transport connections with employment opportunities in Warrington Town Centre and with other key employment areas across the north of the town. This has contributed to a reduction of deprivation in the area.

Green infrastructure has been maintained and enhanced and the functionality has been increased.

# Stockton Heath and South Warrington



## Past

The area was considered to be administratively and culturally 'separate' from Warrington as part of Cheshire. There was also a degree of physical separation given the limited number and capacity of crossings over the Manchester Ship Canal.

The area was home to large employers with Caldwells Forge and Greenalls just across the canal.

The District Shopping Centre at Stockton Heath was a healthy centre that grew organically.

There were frequent traffic hold-ups as ship canal traffic closed swing bridges to road traffic.

The area was characterised by suburban sprawl and development includes large Victorian and Edwardian houses across Walton, Stockton Heath and Grappenhall. Areas of quality landscape and agricultural value were included in the New Town Designated Areas and scheduled for development, some of which has not materialised. Green Belt boundaries had not yet been defined.

## Present

Caldwells has now been developed as The Forge shopping centre and Greenalls has closed. Administratively, the area is now part of Warrington, but there continues to be physical and possibly some cultural 'separation'. There has been no change to ship canal crossings despite the large scale new town housing development to the south. Swing bridge operation is less frequent than in the past but the impacts are greater owing to the growth in road traffic.

New town development is not as extensive as originally envisaged, though significant new housing areas have been developed along Longwood Road from Appleton, through Dudlows Green, to Pewterspear. Some housing sites remain to be developed at Wrights Green and Pewterspear, but all other former new town areas are included in the adopted Green Belt.

The regional motorway network is easily accessible and this has made south Warrington popular for people employed elsewhere in the sub-region. Overall this is the most affluent part of the town.

## Vision - in 2026.....

The area is stable and has not experienced significant change over the last 15 years.

Stockton Heath is thriving as the main retail and service centre in south Warrington, and is a popular evening destination where people feel safe.

Traffic congestion has reduced thanks to effective demand management across the area and despite increased shipping on the Canal.

Opportunities presented by larger Greenfield sites are being examined to ensure they are released only when development is necessary to contribute to the borough's housing needs.

Green infrastructure has been maintained and enhanced and its functionality increased.

# The Countryside and its Constituent Settlements

## Past

This part of the borough comprised mixed farming areas with edge of settlement areas which attracted considerable developer interest. Extensive areas were acquired for development by the New Town – mainly former military sites in north Warrington, but also farmland in south Warrington. The predominant land use is agricultural but mineral extraction and landfill sites were much in evidence particularly in east Warrington.

Culcheth and Lymm were subject to rapid growth at the beginning of the commuter age with the construction of the railway & the station in Lymm, and the establishment of the UKAEA at Risley with its associated demand for housing. A network of small rural settlements originally developed as local farming (and mining in the case of Burtonwood) communities, and often the centres of local parishes with a church and primary school.

Green Belt boundaries were not established across the borough. Most of the smaller settlements saw unplanned sprawl of speculative housing through the 50's and 60's as the growth of car ownership increased mobility. Pressure for housing development continued through the new town era until tight Green Belt boundaries were established in 2006.

## Present

Green Belt boundaries are established and the countryside largely enjoys protection. There are some areas of degraded landscape resulting from long-standing landfill operations. There has been some diversification through the growth of non-agricultural uses such as golf courses, horse riding & stabling and garden centres. Widespread barn conversions to residential use have taken place.

Lymm and Culcheth have developed a wide range of local services and facilities in busy centres offering a range of shops and places to eat and drink. The former railway line through Lymm is now utilised as the Trans-Pennine Trail. The nuclear industry presence at Risley has diminished but significant job opportunities exist at Risley and Birchwood.

Villages within the Green Belt are either Inset Villages or Green Belt Villages in the UDP. The built-up areas of Inset Villages are excluded from the Green Belt to allow a more flexible attitude to new development within them. In Green Belt Villages a stricter approach is adopted. Lymm, Grappenhall & Thelwall, and Burtonwood have produced Village Design Statements.

## Vision - in 2026.....

There is a secure, long-term Green Belt and the countryside is sustainable and attractive with a thriving rural economy and communities. Farm diversification has continued and is supported by a positive approach to development management. Some former landfill sites have been restored. Improved access, amenities and visitor attractions are encouraging more people to enjoy the countryside but not at the expense of its character and tranquillity.

The Green Belt has ensured that settlements have not encroached onto open countryside. Development that has taken place within settlements has consolidated their built form and is to a high standard of design that respects the local character. Important open spaces have been protected and settlement centres continue to offer a good range of shops and services to the local community.

Culcheth High School has been rebuilt and is a hub for a number of local services complementing the village centre.

Walton Hall has been developed as a quality visitor destination making the most of its heritage value and Green Belt location.

Port Warrington has contributed to taking freight off the road network onto the canals and railways.





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