

# Rural Growth in West Cheshire

## Area Programme Review



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## Foreword

In our increasingly mobile and connected society in which the world and our experience of it becomes more virtual than real, how do you understand the place in which you and your family live, have lived and will live? Has it always been like this? Is it static or dynamic? Can you influence the way it changes?

Looking around the communities, businesses and the landscape of west Cheshire it does not take long to realise that it has never stayed still. What we have received is one thing; what we shall pass on is another.

This document unashamedly attempts to shape that future. The Rural Growth Board has worked to understand the economy in the rural areas and market towns across west Cheshire. The strategy aims to articulate clearly how we can develop a sustainable, developing and thriving economy in those places.

We also hope it encourages and helps the development of similar outcomes for the rest of west Cheshire, its towns, city and immediate areas. Nothing exists in isolation. Working collaboratively and collectively with the other Growth and development Boards will create a community which we can all recognise, feel a part of and benefit from today and tomorrow.

*David Felix*

**Reverend Canon David Felix**  
**Chair Rural Growth Board**

## Executive Summary

The Rural and Market Towns Area is the largest area within west Cheshire both in terms of geography and population. It is home to 118,500 people (35% of the Cheshire West and Chester population) and is the location for in excess of 40,000 jobs across a wide range of sectors, most of which are not land based. The rural area is statistically significant and should be recognised as so.

During late 2015, the Rural and Market Town Team for Cheshire West and Chester Council, along with the Rural Growth Board, undertook a review of achievements so far. This document is the result of that review and updates the 2011 Rural Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan and aims to provide a focussed and targeted approach to supporting economic regeneration, growth and development across the borough. It will provide the means to guide action in sustaining and developing the unique, diverse and substantial economic contribution that these communities make to west Cheshire.

The updated strategy supports the Councils overall economic vision through a focus on:

- **Enterprise** – the rural area and market towns as a place for start-ups, spin-offs, innovative and thriving SMEs and Micro-businesses that are attracted, retained and sustained by the quality of the environment, services and housing or connections to the land and the traditional agricultural economy; to retain the existing skilled workforce and to attract investment which will increase the size and diversity of the skills base
- **The Environment and quality of life** – a rural backdrop for the resident and visitor across Cheshire West and Chester. A quality of life offer attracting and retaining a substantial proportion of the West Cheshire skilled workforce; A sense of place – creating and conserving key features of local provenance and its visitor economy;
- **Housing** – meeting local need in housing across all tenures, prices and types of housing to support economic growth in all parts of the rural area while reflecting the unique character and attraction of the Cheshire countryside;
- **Accessibility and Connectivity** – improving physical connectivity and developing digital connectivity within rural areas, the market towns and the larger centres.
- **The Visitor Economy** – expanding and strengthening the role of the rural area and market towns as visitor destinations with a recognised distinctiveness.

## Vision

The vision from the Rural Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan (2011) has been updated to articulate a clear and forward-looking approach to 'rural regeneration'. The vision for the Rural Area and Market Towns is:

**“A sustainable and developing economy in the rural area and market towns of west Cheshire, that supports and develops the established and emerging business community, supports its residents and encourages investment to underpin a quality environment”**

It should be recognised that our rural area is a place that accommodates a significant resident population and is substantial part of the sub-regional economy. The vision supports and develops the established and emerging:

- creators, innovators and providers of all forms economic activity;
- land based industries and their complementary partner businesses;
- food and drink developers and producers;
- tourism and recreation providers;

- life-long learning facilitators;
- contributors to quality of life, health and well-being;

The strategy recognises that west Cheshire already exhibits and will continue to develop and create:

- a distinctive mosaic of attractive and pleasing countryside;
- vibrant, diverse communities and market towns;
- a significant resident population drawn from all social groups;
- a quality of environment and natural history;

all of which will encourage the inflow of financial investment, the development of social capital and build up the common good and should be conserved and managed as part of a balanced approach to maximising its unique potential and fundamental role in the fabric of West Cheshire.

## Delivery

The new vision will support the council to ensure our rural communities thrive and grow sustainably. This will include making sure that they benefit from a quality environment as well as an accessible place to live and work. Delivery is focussed on four strategic themes for the Rural Area and Market Towns:

- Rural housing
- Connectivity and accessibility
- Environment and sense of place
- Business, skills and education

The Rural Growth Board will work with the Council to realise the vision and ensure that, in the development and implementation of its regeneration and housing strategies and policies, it acts consistently with it. The Board will be a critical friend, enabler and catalyst to the Council as it seeks to promote investment and support its rural area, businesses, people and places within it.

## Section 1: Introduction

The Rural and Market Towns Area is the largest area within west Cheshire both in terms of geography and population. It is home to 118,500 people (35% of the Cheshire West and Chester population) and is the location for in excess of 40,000 jobs across a wide range of sectors, most of which are not land based. The rural area is statistically significant and should be recognised as so.

During late 2015, the Rural and Market Town Team for Cheshire West and Chester Council, along with the Rural Growth Board, undertook a review of achievements so far. This document is the result of that review and updates the 2011 Rural Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan and aims to provide a focussed and targeted approach to supporting economic regeneration, growth and development across the borough. It will provide the means to guide action in sustaining and developing the unique, diverse and substantial economic contribution that these communities make to west Cheshire.

### Background

Over the last five years Programme Area strategies have been developed to support the delivery of regeneration and growth across the borough of Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC). The four Programme Areas and the current plans comprise:

- **Rural Area and Market Towns** – *Rural Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan (2011)*
- **Chester** – *Chester One City Plan (2012)*
- **Ellesmere Port** – *Ellesmere Port Vision and Strategic Regeneration Framework (2011)*
- **Mid Cheshire** – *Business Plan (2015)*

During this period the economic and political landscape has changed at every level and has become increasingly driven by economic growth and devolution potential. Equally the Rural Regeneration Board (now the Rural Growth Board) has made significant progress in enabling development and raising the awareness of the rural area, not least through the achievement with partners of LEADER funding and Local Action Group (LAG) status. As such it is timely to review and update the 2011 Rural Regeneration Strategy alongside the other programme areas and to look forward over the short, medium and longer term to ensure that West Cheshire is able to capitalise on its potential.

This document is that review and update of the Rural Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan (September 2011) which remains a key evidence base. Importantly this focussed strategy contributes to raising the profile of the Rural Area and Market Towns and the contribution they make to the Cheshire and Warrington Economic Area, the Northern Powerhouse and national growth objectives. It also underlines the interrelationships with the Chester, Ellesmere Port and Mid Cheshire programme areas in West Cheshire. Collectively the four area strategies present a strong, coherent picture of the borough's economic and growth potential.

### Contributing to the Growth Agenda

In 2015 the government set out a 10 point productivity plan with the aim of harnessing the enormous economic potential England's rural areas have to offer, both for the prosperity of those living in rural areas and for the benefit of the UK economy overall. In this section, the

local priorities have been aligned to show where local delivery is contributing to those National priorities.

Defra 10 point plan relating to local activity and Rural Growth Board objectives.		
<b>DEFRA 2015 ten point productivity plan</b>	CWAC activity	Rural Growth Board strategic objectives (SO)
1 Extensive fast and reliable broadband 95% by 2017	Partnership programme delivery - Connecting Cheshire achieved to date 98% total coverage across Cheshire and Warrington	<b>SO Connectivity &amp; Accessibility</b> of rural areas – the growth board and team working closely with Connecting Cheshire to ensure problem areas are addressed, particularly rural not spots.
2 High quality, widely available mobile coverage	Connecting Cheshire working with BT and other stakeholders for 3G and 4G coverage.	<b>SO Connectivity &amp; Accessibility</b> of rural areas – working with Connecting Cheshire to support alternative models of coverage.
3 Modern transport connections	Upgrading of rail links, car parks at rail stations, improved A roads throughout rural area.	<b>SO Connectivity &amp; Accessibility</b> of rural areas – engagement with the sub regional transport strategy group, opportunity mapping relating to Northern Gateway Development Zone and the Mersey Dee Economic Axis.
4 Access to high quality education & training	Supporting the equine industry through the Cheshire Racing Hub model - aiming to increase the provision of skilled workforce for local equine industry. Local Food Procurement Hub initiative – coordinating with Reaseheath College for local procurement promotion.	<b>SO Skills, employability and education</b> in rural areas – several baseline research actions to be undertaken and engagement with local networks.
In addition to this, Defra's 2016 single departmental plan for rural communities' sets out 6 major objectives, of most relevant to this area of work is point 3:		
<b>'A thriving rural economy, contributing to national prosperity and wellbeing'</b>	Defra's action relating to this is: 'To help rural areas to prosper and contribute to national prosperity; ensure people in towns, villages and hamlets have access to the same technology as those in cities; and to promote rural policy across Government to give a stronger voice to countryside issues'	

### *Strategic and Economic Plan for Cheshire and Warrington*

The Strategic and Economic Plan for Cheshire and Warrington (SEP) established a vision of the area as one consistently delivering economy growth and productivity above UK levels, fostering a growing economy of new jobs and homes and being recognised as a modern, strong, sophisticated and attractive business and residential location, both urban and rural, and known increasingly for innovation, enterprise and skills.

The SEP confirms that this will require focused effort on creating the conditions for sustainable growth whilst accelerating smart growth. Importantly for this review and update, the SEP identifies a number of strategic imperatives to which interventions delivered in partnership with the LEP are to contribute to. These are:

- delivering a manufacturing renaissance
- attracting and retaining talent through the housing offer, employment opportunities and quality of life
- being equipped for market and technology change
- maximising growth assets
- restoring a productivity premium
- internationally connected and engaged

### **Cheshire West and Chester Growth Strategy**

The Cheshire West and Chester Council Economic Growth Strategy ‘Altogether Better For Business’ has provided a steer over the last three years to our approach to economic growth in the Borough. With a strengthening sub-regional economic landscape a refresh and broadening out of our approach is considered to be timely as CWaC is now choosing to work even more closely with neighbouring authorities and with organisations and partners such as the Local Enterprise Partnership and Mersey Dee Alliance to deliver shared priorities. As an Authority CWaC has also set out a new vision and ten key outcomes to support the vision (Figure 1).

#### **Vision:**

**‘To help the borough – including residents, communities and the local economy – to thrive by 2020’.**

Figure 1: CWaC Thrive Wheel



CWaC now has an opportunity to work and operate within an emerging devolution agenda to cement links with the Northern Powerhouse. The refreshed CWaC Growth Strategy aims to respond to the issues that are currently challenging businesses locally and outlines how this is going to be achieved. CWaC's approach places the public sector as a facilitator and enabler for businesses. The focus is on the creation of the right conditions for sustainable economic growth, e.g. by working collaboratively, using its assets and resources in innovative ways, providing the right leadership and to work alongside the private sector to create growth and jobs.

The Growth Strategy therefore sets out a package of targeted activity to facilitate and support predominantly private sector led development and investment in order to achieve growth targets for jobs, new homes and investment (Figure 2).

The four Programme Areas are integral to the delivery of the Council's Growth Strategy and Council's Plan. Specifically for the rural areas the Corporate Vision is to enable the area to thrive and grow sustainably, benefiting from a quality environment as well as being an accessible place to live and work, and one where the housing offer is affordable and appropriate.

*Figure 2: CWaC Growth Strategy Targets<sup>1</sup>*

<b>Targets 2013 – 17</b>	<b>Position at 2016</b>
<b>5,000</b> new jobs	<b>4,399</b> new jobs created since 2013
<b>1,100</b> new homes per annum	<b>4,310</b> new homes built since 2013
<b>£500m</b> worth of private sector investment	<b>£541m</b> worth of investment

Built around four Strategic Objectives the CWaC Growth Strategy identifies, promotes and strengthens the economic benefits of what the Council already does and plans to do. The strategic objectives (SO) are:

- SO1 – Enterprise and Business**
- SO2 – Infrastructure**
- SO3 – Employment and Skills**
- SO4 – Enabling Growth**

### **Spatial Relationships and Priorities**

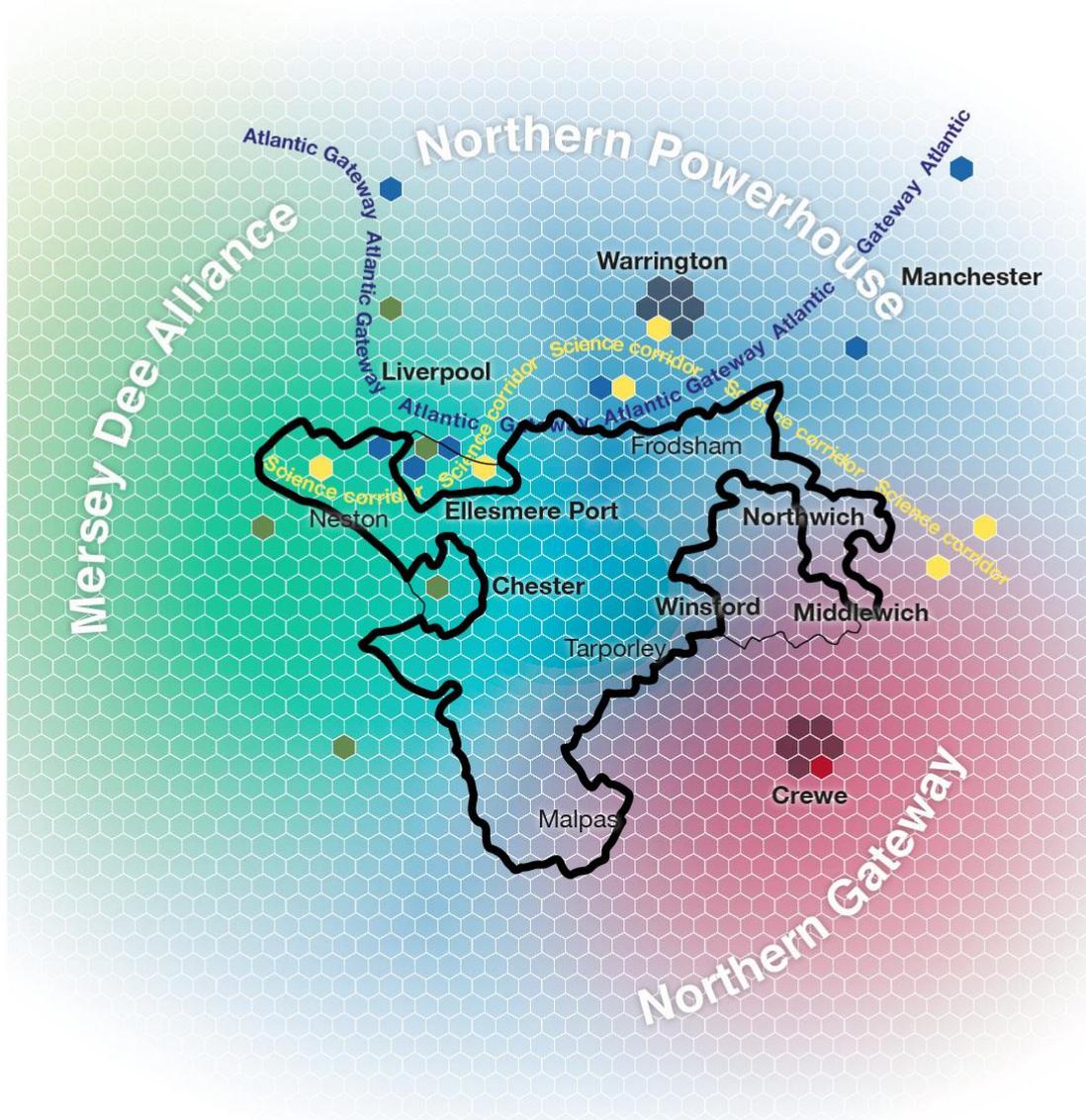
With a strengthening national and sub-regional agenda, and in advance of a potential devolution deal for Cheshire and Warrington, opportunities are being realised to deliver shared priorities working more closely with partners across Cheshire and Warrington Liverpool, Manchester, Wirral, North East Wales, Staffordshire through the **Northern Powerhouse** agenda, the **Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)**, the **Mersey Dee Alliance (MDA)** and the **Northern Gateway Partnership**.

Cheshire West and Chester, Cheshire East and Warrington Councils and the LEP have submitted an expression of interest to become a Combined Authority. This Devolution

<sup>1</sup> New jobs created since 2013, new homes built since 2013, £m worth of private sector investment

Growth Deal will ask for greater control of the funds available to the sub-region which will have the potential to open up opportunities for the four Programme Areas. Figure 3 below reflects the sub-regional landscape including the spatial priorities and the relationship between the Rural Area and Market Towns and the rest of the sub-region.

Figure 3 – Spatial Relationships



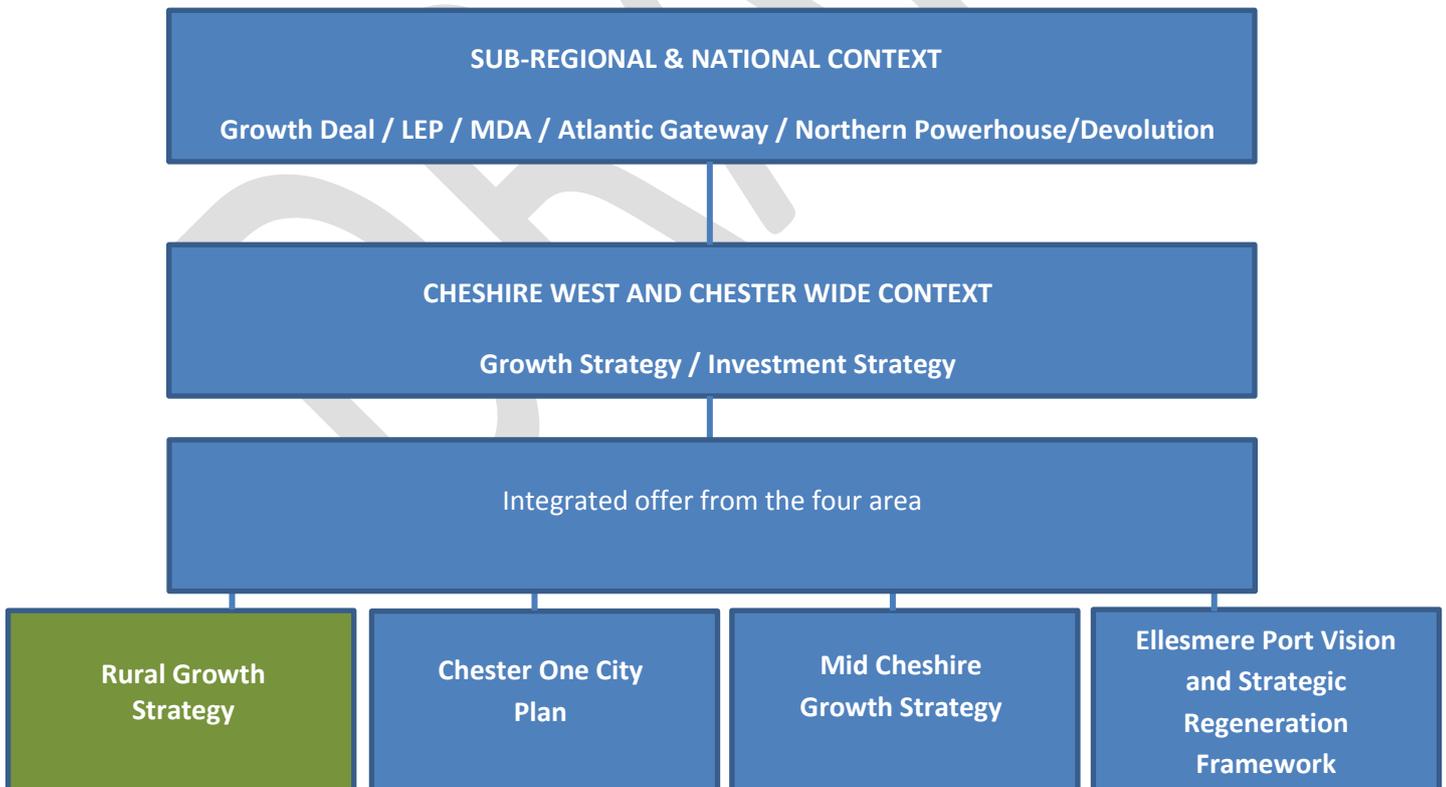
-  Rural
-  **Atlantic Gateway Ports**  
Liverpool Wirral Bridgewater Ince Warrington Salford
-  **Mersey Dee Alliance – Key Employment Sites**  
Wirral Waters Ellesmere Port Chester CBQ Northern Gateway Deeside Wrexham IE
-  **Cheshire Science Corridor**  
Capenhurst Thornton Sci-Tech Birchwood Jodrell Bank Bio-hub
-  **HS2 Hub**

The sub-regional spatial priorities to which the Rural Area and Market Towns update and review responds to are:

- **Mersey Dee Economic Axis** – a zone of innovation and advanced manufacturing straddling North East Wales, Wirral and West Cheshire aiming to deliver 54,000 new jobs and 41,000 new homes by 2040.
- **Cheshire Science Corridor** – a corridor of interconnected centres of scientific excellence across Cheshire and Warrington.
- **Atlantic Gateway** – the world trade, logistics, business and innovation corridor stretches from Deeside to Merseyside and through Cheshire and Warrington to Manchester.
- **Crewe High Growth City and HS2 Hub** – a major development and connectivity hub with accelerated growth potential for houses and jobs.
- **Northern Gateway Development Zone** – the major growth and investment opportunity that connects the Northern Powerhouse and the Midland Engine aiming to deliver 100,000 new homes and 120,000 new jobs by 2040.
- **Warrington New City** – a continued focus for employment growth and new housing. Warrington’s connectivity will be reinforced in the future as it sits at the intersection of HS2/West Coast mainline and HS3 (TransNorth Rail) aiming to deliver 26,000 new homes and 55,000 new jobs.

Figure 4 illustrates the linkages between the sub-regional priorities above and those priorities, policies and programmes at the borough level and the individual Programme Areas.

Figure 4 – Linkages between Strategic and Local Area Priorities, Policy and Programmes



## Programme Area Inter-relationships

The strategy for the Rural Area and Market Towns is intended to maximise the area's potential and wider contribution. In doing so, the focus is on maintaining and enhancing a rural environment which is at once both quintessentially 'Cheshire' but is also a place which is home to a vibrant business community; a place which has a strong visitor economy based around a clear identity and destination offer; a place which is home to sustainable communities which have a diverse housing offer meeting local need and aspirational housing choices; and a place that connects rural and market towns to Chester and other regional centres.

The updated strategy for the Rural Area and Market Towns supports the borough's economic Vision (Figure 5) through an overall focus on:

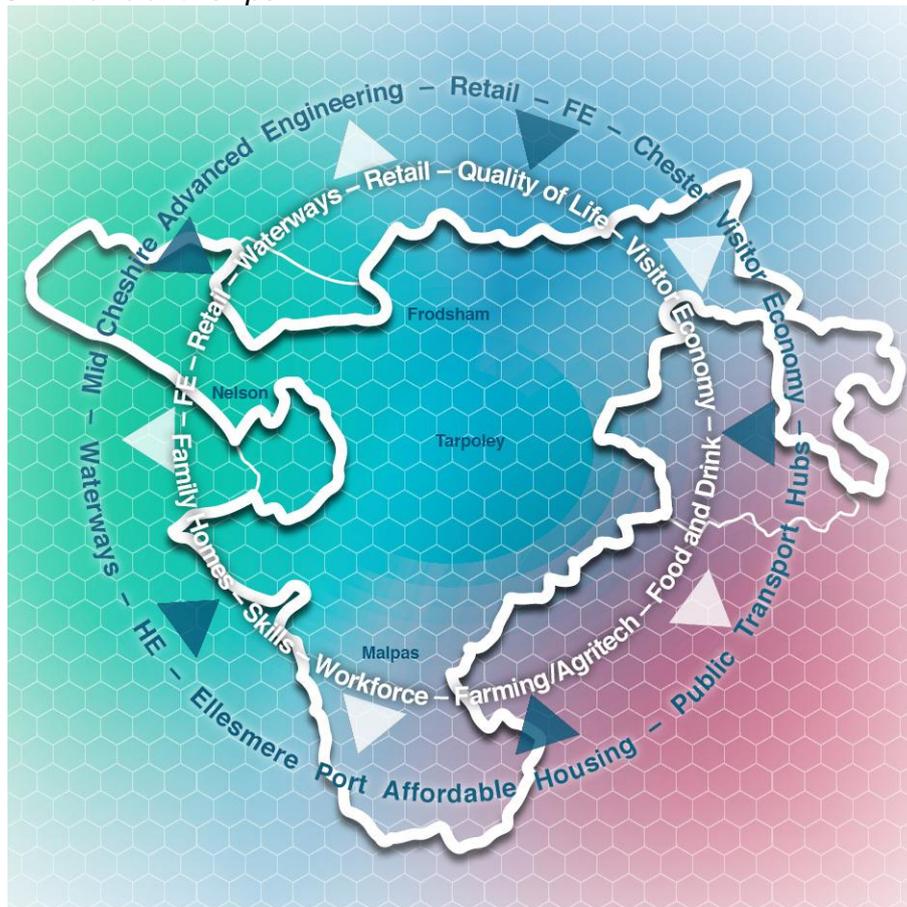
- **Enterprise** – the rural area and market towns as a place for start-ups, spin-offs, innovative and thriving SMEs and Micro-businesses that are attracted, retained and sustained by the quality of the environment, services and housing or connections to the land and the traditional agricultural economy; to retain the existing skilled workforce and to attract investment which will increase the size and diversity of the skills base
- **The Environment and quality of life** – a rural backdrop for the resident and visitor across Cheshire West and Chester. A quality of life offer attracting and retaining a substantial proportion of the West Cheshire skilled workforce; A sense of place – creating and conserving key features of local provenance that reinforce the West Cheshire identity and its visitor economy;
- **Housing** – meeting local need in housing across all tenures, prices and types of housing to support economic growth in all parts of the rural area while reflecting the unique character and attraction of the Cheshire countryside;
- **Accessibility and Connectivity** – improving physical connectivity and developing digital connectivity within rural areas, the market towns and the larger centres.
- **The Visitor Economy** – expanding and strengthening the role of the rural area and market towns as visitor destinations with a recognised distinctiveness.

Specifically, these areas of importance will be delivered by focussing on four strategic themes:

- **Rural Housing**
- **Connectivity and Accessibility**
- **Environment and Sense of Place**
- **Business, skills and education**

The Rural Growth Board will work with the Council to realise the vision and ensure that, in the development and implementation of its regeneration and housing strategies and policies, it acts consistently with it. The Board will be a critical friend, enabler and catalyst to the Council as it seeks to promote investment and support its rural area, businesses, people and places within it.

Figure 5 – Interrelationships



Importantly and in turn Figure 5 sets out how the other programme areas support the development of the Rural Area and Market Towns across a number of themes:

**Chester Growth Partnership** – a regionally important centre which accommodates city scale retail, educational, leisure and administrative assets, as well major employers; a key driver of the visitor economy (City Centre, Chester Zoo); a market for goods and services; a visible focal point for the equine industry (Chester Racecourse) and a driver for improved, strategic public transport links. A key and growing market for goods and services.

**Ellesmere Port** – a major employment location and market for goods and services; a key retail and leisure location for visitors to Cheshire (waterways & boat museum); an industrial heritage and commercial dimension to the visitor experience. A key hub in a sustainable public transport network serving the Rural Area and Market Towns.

**Mid Cheshire** – a key employment location and market for goods and services, retail and service centres; a gateway to the West Cheshire countryside and interface with the Northern Gateway and the opportunities of HS2, an industrial heritage and waterways dimension to the visitor experience; hubs in a sustainable public transport network. The Mid Cheshire and Rural Area in particular have a number of shared objectives which means a close working relationship.

## Section 2: The Rural Area and Market Towns Profile

The Rural Area and Market Towns is geographically the largest of the four programme areas, home to 35% of the borough's population and is the location for 36% of the businesses across the whole of Cheshire West and Chester.

### Role and Profile

The Rural Area area contains a stunningly diverse mosaic of natural and built environment along with a number of **market towns and villages namely Malpas, Neston, Tarporley, and Frodsham**; all of which contribute to the economy in the rural area and a key contributor to the wider economy of Cheshire West and Chester as a whole. The Market Towns perform an important function in providing services, jobs and social and cultural opportunities for rural communities as well as attracting visitors from outside the rural area.

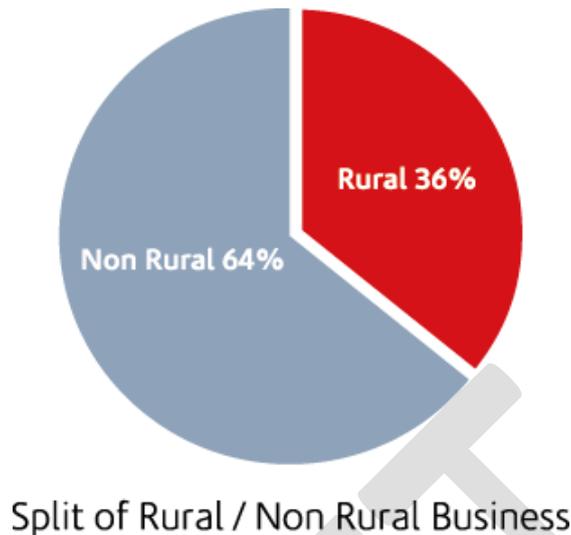
There are some key **challenges in common with the other three Programme Areas** including instances of poor access to services (particularly high speed broadband), limited public transport, an ageing population and a lack of affordable housing of the right type that contributes to challenges in retaining its working age population and younger families.

The Rural Area is complex. There is a perceived lack of 'rural identity', which is partly a symptom of the fairly dispersed nature of the rural territory which forms the areas between larger, more urbanised settlements. To those that live and work here, our rural area has a strong identity and an important one. A cultural mind-set will help to support the thriving myriad of small businesses in **high-tech, ICT, and Professional Services** as well as growing sectors especially around new enterprises including **Agri-Technology, the Equine industry, Breeding and Food & Drink** (illustrated in Figure 7). This highlights the importance of the rural areas economic potential as being a diverse economy which could attract people of all ages and skill sets.

The Rural Growth Board along with the Rural and Market Towns team have worked to improve perceptions in regards to the role of the rural area as an economic driver and contributor to the wider economy of CWaC and the North West region.

The statistics speak for themselves. Of particular note are the 6,555 known companies located in the Rural Area. Figure 6 shows the split of rural and non-rural businesses for Cheshire West, a total percentage of 66% being rural with the dominant sector being professional services, business consultancy and business support as well as wholesale and retail trade

Figure 6 – Split of rural to Non-rural businesses for Cheshire West and Chester, 6555 rural businesses.



Source: MINT data filtered for rural CWAC postcodes.

The area is also home to a number of key employment sites such as Chowley Oak Business Park near Tattenhall, Clayhill Business Park, Neston, Weaver Park Industrial Estate at Frodsham, Monument Park at Farndon and Portal Business Park at Tarporley. This highlights the strength of the rural setting and related benefits for business that occupy sites such as these. It should be noted that although small in statistical terms employment in agriculture and land base industries are still vital to maintaining Rural Cheshire and associated food and drink industries.

Rural tourism has grown and there are some major visitor attractions in the rural area that attract visitors from all over the country such as Delamere Forest, Ness Gardens and the Cheshire Ice Cream Farm at Tattenhall amongst others. A summary of the SOC (Strengths, Opportunities and Challenges) of the rural area are considered below in Figure 7.

Figure 7 – SOC Analysis for the Rural Area and Market Towns

Strengths	Opportunities	Challenges
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Quality of life</li> <li>▪ Environment</li> <li>▪ Diversity and scale</li> <li>▪ Market towns</li> <li>▪ Resident population</li> <li>▪ Relationship to other areas</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Greater awareness of 'mainstream' economic contribution to growth</li> <li>▪ Maximise the economic potential of the Market Towns</li> <li>▪ New enterprises such as agri-tech and related sector offers</li> <li>▪ Skilled and entrepreneurial workforce</li> <li>▪ Proximity to regional centres</li> <li>▪ Waterways</li> <li>▪ Enhanced destination branding for rural tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Affordable housing, need and delivery</li> <li>▪ Balancing economic growth and environmental quality</li> <li>▪ Having a voice at a sub-regional and regional level</li> <li>▪ Presenting the investment proposition</li> </ul>

## Development Planning

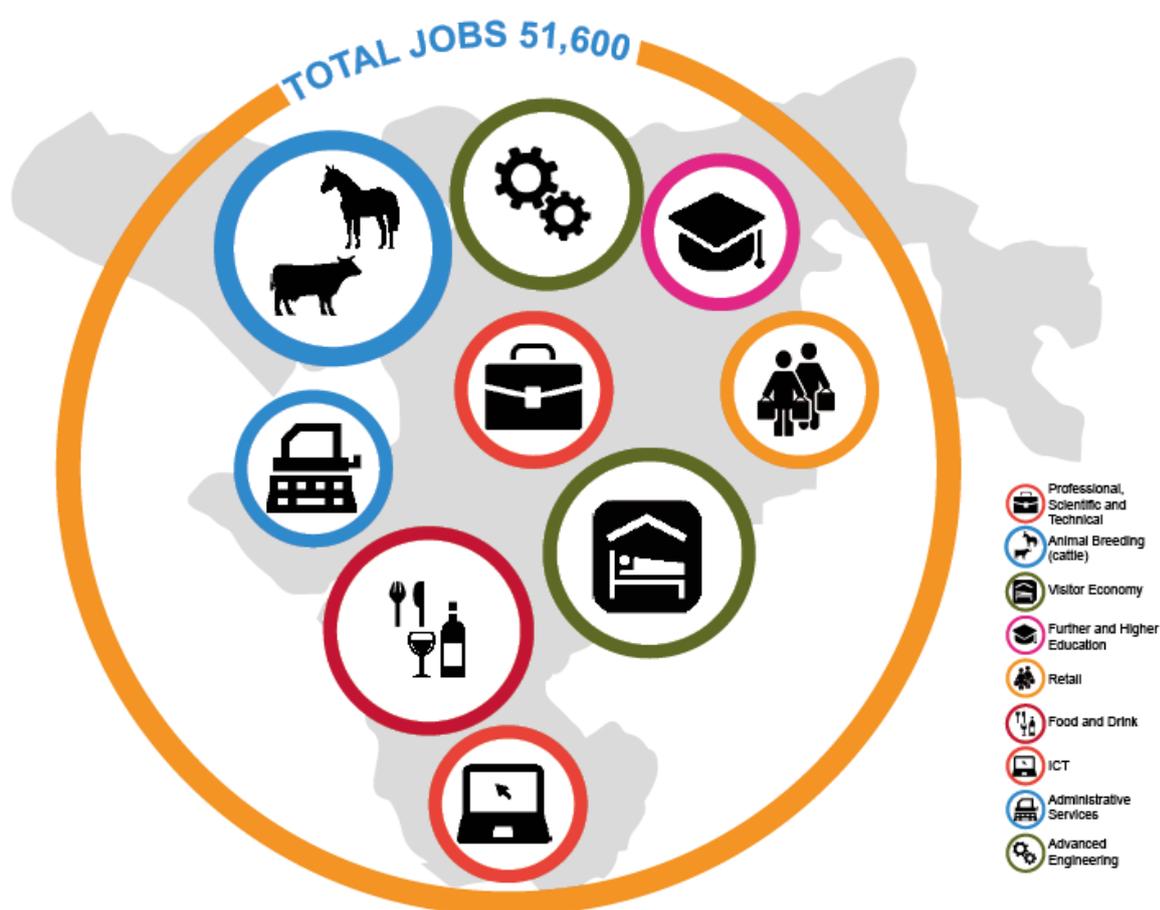
The Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies was adopted in January 2015. It provides the overall vision, strategic objectives, spatial strategy and strategic planning policies for the borough to 2030.

For the Rural Area and Market Towns plans for development comprise:

- **Delivering at least 4,200 new dwellings, with at least 2,300 of this requirement to be directed to the key service centres.**
- **Delivering at least 10 hectares of land for business and industrial development through the expansion of existing employment sites and sites within or on the edge of key service centres, outside of Green Belt locations.**

Figure 7 – Key sector strengths in rural Cheshire West and Chester

Source: NOMIS data (BRES) 2014



## Section 3: Area Strategy Review

This section summarises the review of the Rural Regeneration Area Strategy and Action Plan (2011) including the achievements to date. Building on this, the updated Vision, objectives and actions are illustrated in section 4.

## Delivering the Rural Regeneration Strategy

Since the adoption of the Rural Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan in 2011, and creation of the Rural Regeneration Board in 2012, significant activity has taken place in a number of areas (summarised in Figure 8).

The 2011 strategy was an in depth analysis of the rural area of the borough, recognising the relationships between the rural area and market towns, and indeed other urban centres in the area. It rightly acknowledged the rural area is a substantial part of the economic and population base of West Cheshire. The Master Action Plan identified 44 actions across 8 topic areas, namely accessibility; housing; innovations, enterprise and skills, broadband, new ways of working; energy and climate change; natural and historic environment; implementation and delivery.

Reflecting the complexity of the rural area and market towns, the work of the Rural Regeneration board to date has been diverse, touching on a number of areas around facilitation, knowledge sharing, elements of place making, strategy development and the environment.

A full list of achievements over the last five years in the Rural Area and Market Towns is provided in the appendices.

Figure 8 – Key Investments and Achievements Diagram



The achievement of £3 million LEADER funding and Local Action Group Status for pan Cheshire, the formation of the Cheshire Racing Hub and setting up the Sandstone Ridge Trust and a key partner in the Connecting Cheshire programme have been significant successes (Figure 9)

Figure 9 – Key Investments and Achievements Figures<sup>2</sup>

### Review

The Rural Regeneration Strategy (2011) has been the basis for a number of notable successes – which given the role and profile of the rural area are much softer than those in neighbouring Programme Areas. The area is complex and diverse comprising rural and ‘urban’ Market Towns and areas strongly influenced by the major centres, such as Chester. This presents a challenge for focus and prioritisation and a balance between addressing distinct rural issues with those of market towns (and indeed other centres) to the well-being of rural communities, and of course vice versa.

A 2015 review of priorities and the obvious need to focus, has clearly established four strategic themes which align closely with those of the CWaC Growth Strategy and the three other area boards, albeit of course with a focus on rural and market town objectives within that framework. The themes are reflective of the core issues and the challenges going forward:

- **Rural housing**
- **Connectivity and accessibility**
- **Environment and sense of place**
- **Business, skills and education**

### Moving Forward

Moving forward and reflecting the strategic themes set out by the Board; there is a clear case for an overall emphasis on:

#### **Rural housing**

Meeting the assessed needs of those who live in the rural area already and attracting new people to increase the working age population and facilitate access for younger families.

#### **Connectivity and accessibility**

Re-enforcing the role of the rural areas as a sustainable location and recognising its role as complementary to neighbouring urban centres. Improved connectivity to these areas raises their ability to attract new businesses and workers.

<sup>2</sup> New jobs are based on the Programme Area’s achievements to date. Housing figures are based on the Annual Monitoring Report (position at March 2015). Investment includes public and private sector investment. The figures are indicative of the contribution the Programme Area has made to the delivery of economic growth in the Rural Area and Market Towns.

## **Environment and sense of place**

**Enhancing the quality of life and sense of place** - raising the profile of the market towns and villages and strengthening the role of the visitor economy by maximising environment, culture, heritage and green infrastructure assets.

**Promoting local distinctiveness** - ensuring that the distinctive features of both the built and natural environment are protected and managed in a way that attracts and retains a substantial proportion of the West Cheshire's skilled workforce.

## **Business, skills and education**

**Skills and training** – understanding, and addressing any skills needs and gaps by ensuring businesses in the rural area have the necessary key sector skill requirements accessible and available to them.

**Business growth** – enabling large, small and micro businesses to thrive, promoting existing or new sector investment propositions.

In addressing these topics there is clear merit and strength in collaboration between the Rural Area and Market Towns, the other Programme Areas and the LEP. Joint working will create opportunities through:

- Embedding a shared view of the combined strength and opportunities of the four programme areas fostering collaborator working to feed up to the presentation of the Borough through the CWaC Growth Strategy.
- Presenting a strong case at the Cheshire and Warrington economic area and Northern Powerhouse levels and in engaging with, for example, transport for the North.
- Providing access and exposure to topic specific advice and input from Cheshire West officers with cross borough responsibilities in areas such as business support, transport, skills and planning. This will be to the benefit of jointly identifying synergies with the other Programme Areas, raising the profile of the Boards more consistently outside of the CWaC Regeneration Team and in making best use of officer time.
- Providing a vehicle to explore and develop more joined up, complementary activities across key areas.
- Knowledge sharing - allied to closer collaboration is more effective knowledge sharing, principally between key partners, such as the LEP and CWaC to the Area Board. Going forward, with the support of CWaC the opportunity should be taken to source and maintain a simple list of 'live' indicators that chart progress. This will enable success and outcomes to be more clearly measured and the strategy fine-tuned or developed in a number of areas

## **Section 4: Rural Area and Market Towns' Focus for the Future**

This section focuses on the Rural Area and Market Towns Area Growth Strategy moving forward including an updated vision, objectives and priority activities. The strategic themes identified by the Rural Growth Board have been aligned to the CWaC strategic objectives.

The board will use these themes as the means to promote growth in the rural area by identifying projects and funding opportunities.

The Rural Area and Market Towns Area Growth Strategy will be regularly reviewed and updated. This update and review document will be due a review in 2019. The objectives and actions are therefore primarily focused on the next three years 2016-2019.

## Vision

The vision from the Rural Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan (2011) has been updated to articulate a clear and forward-looking approach to 'rural regeneration'. The vision for the Rural Area and Market Towns is:

**“A sustainable and developing economy in the rural area and market towns of west Cheshire, that supports and develops the established and emerging business community, supports its residents and encourages investment to underpin a quality environment”**

It should be recognised that our rural area is a place that accommodates a significant resident population and a substantial part of the sub-regional economy in, agri-tech and agriculture and food and drink sectors, and the visitor economy, but also a thriving and diverse small business community. The quality of the environment and built heritage should be conserved and managed as part of a balanced approach to maximising its unique potential and fundamental role in the very fabric West Cheshire.

## The Rural Area and Market Towns Objectives and Actions

Aligning with the borough's Strategic Objectives (SO), the strategic themes for the Rural Area and Market Towns are established and set out in Table 1 below:

*Table 1 – CWaC Strategic Objectives and Rural Area Strategic Themes*

CWaC Strategic Objective (SO)	Rural Area and Market Towns Strategic Themes
<b>Enterprise and Business (SO1) Employment and Skills (SO3)</b>	Business, skills and education
<b>Housing (SO2)</b>	Rural Housing
<b>Transport (SO2)</b>	Connectivity and Accessibility
<b>Infrastructure (SO2)</b>	Environment and Sense of Place

CWaC Strategic Objective 4 (S04) – Enabling Growth is a cross-cutting objective and inherent in all of the above.

The Rural Area and Market Towns Programme Area Objectives and Activities in the context of the strategic themes are outlined below.

## Strategic Theme: Business, Skills and Education

**The related CWaC Growth Strategy Strategic Objective for Enterprise and Business (SO1) is to ensure that businesses get the right support to survive, prosper and grow.**

For the Rural Area and Market Towns this means an emphasis on supporting the growth of existing and new SMEs and micro businesses, and clearly establishing the area as a focus for enterprise, start-ups, spin-offs, innovation and diversity that are attracted, retained and sustained by the quality of the environment.

**The CWaC Growth Strategy Strategic Objective for Employment and Skills (SO3) is to ensure the right skills are supplied to meet business and employment needs.**

This means collaboration between businesses, education establishments and local residents to ensure the workforce are equipped with the skills required in key sectors, creating a balanced and retaining a high level skilled workforce with an emphasis on the working age population and younger people.

Rural Place Objective	Work stream
<p><b>To engage with educational establishments and address training provision related to skills needs or gaps.</b></p>	<p>Identify key markets &amp; or sectors that are growing within the rural area across the borough. Work with partners to understand and analyse data and intelligence and map to provision available in the area through workzones, training providers, colleges and universities.</p>
	<p>Through more collaborative working between partners, employers, schools (including those with a 6<sup>th</sup> form) , further and higher education institutions and employers to develop a more robust understanding of skills needs and gaps in rural West Cheshire.</p> <p>Where skills gaps appear, work with partners such as Mid-Cheshire and Chester Boards, CWaC, Training Providers, FE Colleges, the LEP and SMEs to develop an action plan to address these issues. For example develop bespoke training packages, support work experience placements, promote traineeships and apprenticeships etc</p>
	<p>Establish a forum to engage with young people and capture their views in relation to the skills required to support the rural economy. For example understand any barriers to accessing training or apprenticeship opportunities such as transport.</p>
	<p>Rural Growth Board to explore with FE and HE colleges whether they can share research findings (e.g. from student surveys) about the concerns and aspirations of young people.</p>
	<p>Strengthen the Rural Growth Board's relationship with the LEP Employment and Skills Board collectively with other development boards.</p>
	<p>Contribute to the delivery of a "Higher Level Skills Strategy" for Cheshire West to increase (and retain) the number of residents with access to higher-level skills and realise our growth potential.</p>

	Work with Schools, HE & FE providers and local rural businesses to ensure they are both well supported to strengthen the work ready aspiration for young people.
<b>To support business growth with an emphasis on SMEs and Micro businesses.</b>	Carry out a full and robust analysis of businesses operating within the rural area to understand and potentially engage with successful examples to showcase and work with those who have growth aspirations
	Identify and engage with businesses to deliver a package of business support and access grant funding.
	Maximise the take up of business support via the emerging Cheshire and Warrington Growth Hub in particular focusing on increasing the impact of relevant programmes to facilitate the creation of new businesses and the growth of existing businesses.
	Develop a stronger identity for the business community to collaborate and cultivate – develop a business map and create a ‘rural enterprise brand’ that enforces a cultural mind-set that places the rural areas as home to a thriving, diverse business community.
	Deliver a successful LEADER programme 2015-2020 and where appropriate bid for further funds such as the cooperation funding to continue to support SMEs, growth and jobs.
<b>To develop sector propositions based on a robust analysis of business activity and opportunity in the rural area</b>	Develop sector investment propositions to building Cheshire West national and international reputation for SMEs and microbusinesses, agri-tech (including animal and conservation, breeding, equine, life sciences, dairy, food and drink i.e. Cheshire Food Hub), professional services and ITC.
	Specifically develop a bid or bids for creating a Rural Destination brand in preparation for funding becoming available.
	Supply opportunities - Promote public sector procurement opportunities to rural businesses, identify and retain spend local through major regeneration programmes delivered by the public and private sector.
	Engage with CWaC Local Plan Team to identify employment sites.

## Strategic Theme: Rural Housing

**The CWaC Growth Strategy Strategic Objective for Housing (SO2) is to have the right type of housing in place to support growth.**

In the Rural Area and Market Towns this means supporting the delivery of at least 2,785<sup>3</sup> (up to 2030) new homes of the right type in rural locations, with a particular emphasis on affordable housing, family housing, housing for older people and high quality housing. Underpinning is the need to attract and retain a skilled workforce that will support businesses in the rural area. Development of new housing should support the growth and economic well-being of the Market Towns: - Neston, Frodsham, Tarporley and Malpas as well as the rural villages.

Rural Place Objective	Work stream
<p><b>To support the delivery of at least 2,785 new homes (up to 2030).</b></p>	<p>Housing sub-group set up and working with officers and stakeholders (including Rural Growth Board Members) as part of the Rural Housing Strategy and Delivery Group to 'Define Need', set actions against the Rural Housing Needs and undertake or co-ordinate activity to achieve each action point.</p>
	<p>Work with communities, parish councils, Third Sector Organisations, including Cheshire Community Action, large employers/estates to assess perceived needs of housing in their areas.</p>
	<p>Utilising information from evidence gathering activities to develop a robust baseline and evidence base highlighting rural housing issues and needs facing West Cheshire. Share information to ensure all relevant organisations are benefitting from up to date intelligence.</p>
	<p>Rural Housing Strategy &amp; Delivery Group (using the enhanced evidence base) to ensure better informed planning policies and decisions that take fuller, more accurate account of the housing needs of rural West Cheshire.</p>
<p><b>To champion the delivery of housing to meet assessed needs in the rural area. This includes good quality affordable and family housing, starter homes, 'downsizers' for older person households, that will all retain and attract a balanced workforce.</b></p>	<p>Work as part of the CWaC Rural Housing Strategy and Delivery Group to develop tailored, comprehensive and co-ordinated approaches to enhance delivery of housing to meet assessed needs within the rural area. Using the enhanced evidence base to promote those approaches to Forward Planning officials.</p>

<sup>3</sup> CWaC Local Plan (2015) housing requirement for the Rural Area minus housing completions as of March 2015 (Annual Monitoring Report).

	<p>Use new approaches as a means to inform neighbourhood plans and influence ongoing planning policies. Explore options to deliver a range of new affordable products, with an emphasis on rentals. Working with large estates and utilising S106. Also promote take up of Neighbourhood Plans and Community Land Trusts.</p>
	<p>Engage with all house builders/providers for feedback on new approaches.</p>
	<p>Act as “Rural-proofing” function to statutory plan proposals, prior to general public consultation stage.</p>
	<p>Rural Growth Board Members to develop a programme of activity to disseminate information to a variety of audiences utilising different outlets from:- Local Councillors, websites to networks.</p>
	<p>Overall promotion of Rural Housing activities based on up to date evidence base.</p>
	<p>Rural Housing Strategy &amp; Delivery Group to engage in and monitor progress towards targets for housing in the Rural area.</p>

**Strategic Theme: Connectivity and Accessibility**

**The CWaC Growth Strategy Strategic Objective (SO2) for transport is to have the right transport infrastructure in place to support growth.**

In the Rural Area and Market Towns this means re-enforcing the role of rural areas as sustainable locations and recognising them as ‘feeders’ to larger neighbouring centres. Improving public transport facilities, local highways and rail services to enhance accessibility to Chester, Manchester, Liverpool and Crewe, including connectivity to HS2. Retaining the next generation and attracting new households to create a balanced population will require access to employment and services.

Continuing to improve digital connectivity, including broadband and mobile coverage.

Rural Place Objective	Work stream
<p><b>To ensure that all areas across rural Cheshire West have access to superfast broadband and better mobile coverage.</b></p>	<p>Work collaboratively with key partners (including LEP and private sector) to identify and better understand technical barriers relating to broadband, digital technology and mobile coverage (3G and 4G) in rural West Cheshire.</p>
	<p>Make well informed representations to contractors (BT or others), Connecting Cheshire and others to highlight specific shortcomings in terms of digital connectivity and pressing the case for investment/improvement to enable growth (with baseline objective of 40 Mbps service throughout the rural area).</p>
	<p>To analyse evidence base available through Connecting Cheshire to identify the barriers related to digital connectivity.</p>
	<p>Continue to engage with key service providers and co-ordinate a borough-wide response with other Programme Areas, pressing the case for investment/improvement to enable growth. Co-ordinate with Mid Cheshire in particular relating to HS2 opportunities.</p>
	<p>Liaise with the CWaC Planning Authority to encourage proposals to incorporate superfast broadband access into planning conditions and protocols for street works.</p>
<p><b>To improve overall accessibility into and from the rural area and market towns by all modes of transport linking with sub regional activity.</b></p>	<p>Co-ordinate the Rural Area and Market Towns priorities with the transport opportunities identified in other CWaC Programme Areas, working with the CWaC transport officers and the Local Transport Plan, Programme Area Teams and Development Boards, to establish the borough-wide priorities which will also contribute to sub-regional growth. Co-ordinate with Mid Cheshire in particular.</p>
	<p>Commission work exploring the potential opportunities presented by the HS2 development – specifically in the context of rural West Cheshire.</p>
	<p>Design and deliver a communication plan that highlights the opportunities of HS2 to local businesses and residents.</p>

<b>Future proof access provision in the rural area improving access to work for all.</b>	Rural Board to seek representation on the Sub-regional transport strategy group. Group to use this as a forum to 'rural proof' emerging transport plans.
	Road and Transport network forward planning and future proofing.

### Strategic Theme: Environment and Sense of Place

**The CWaC Growth Strategy Strategic Objective for Infrastructure (SO2) is to ensure that the right type of infrastructure is in place to support growth (housing and transport have been covered separately so this means all other infrastructure<sup>4</sup>).** In the Rural Area and Market Towns this means continuing to enhance the distinctive quality of life offer that attracts and retains a substantial proportion of the West Cheshire skilled workforce. Raising the profile of the market towns and strengthening the role of the visitor economy by maximising environment, culture, heritage and green infrastructure assets. Continuing to invest in the waterways which contribute to the sense of place and well-being.

<b>Rural Place Objective</b>	<b>Work stream</b>
<b>To promote the value of 'sense of place' and local distinctiveness to the local economy, embracing cultural, historical and natural assets.</b>	Work with key stakeholders including the LEP to raise the profile of the value of the West Cheshire's natural, cultural and historical asset base and local distinctiveness.
	The Rural Growth Board to champion the value of the natural asset base by preparing think pieces/policy papers on the subject. Target stakeholders would include policy makers but also the private sector – enhancing their awareness of how to potentially maximise the value of natural assets but in sustainable and sensitive ways.
	The Rural Growth Board to promote the value of 'sense of place' and local distinctiveness to the local economy, embracing cultural, historical and natural assets. To inform all rural stakeholders, and the value of the local distinctiveness in Neighbourhood Planning.
	Develop (in conjunction with key partners) a Rural Board Seminar Series to maximise linkages/synergies between existing events and potentially identify new events to add to the programme.
	Develop the visitor economy brand which is significantly stronger and more direct, to ensure rural West Cheshire is clearly articulated as a destination.
<b>To support sustainable management of our natural assets</b>	The Rural Growth Board to support the Sandstone Ridge Trust in its bid to secure the sustainable and long term protection and management of the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge. A number of delivery mechanisms

<sup>4</sup> Other infrastructure includes but may not be limited to: property, place, assets, capital projects, digital connectivity, environment and green infrastructure. Infrastructure that creates the environment required to support economic growth.

	<p>will be evaluated including a designation of the Cheshire Sandstone Ridge as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).</p>
<p><b>To develop an environmental asset strategy that will support a stronger visitor economy as well as quality of environment and place linked to the waterways of Cheshire West.</b></p>	<p>Partnership development – working with partners to deliver ‘landscape scale’ improvement across the borough – seeking opportunity to utilise the landscape to contribute to economic growth and putting the right infrastructure in place to support its delivery.</p>
	<p>Engage with the CWaC Planning Policy team to develop an appropriate planning policy framework.</p>
	<p>Co-ordinate with other Programme Areas to develop and implement the Waterways Strategy that will link with other parts of the borough, including the strategies of Chester, Ellesmere Port and Mid Cheshire.</p>

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## Section 5: Key Messages and Priorities

The Rural Area and Market Towns should not be unduly overshadowed by the urban areas or be perceived to be limited to a supporting role or economic sectors related to the land. 35% of the Borough's population live in the rural area and as such is a very significant resource of skills, innovation and quality of life – core themes of growth at all levels.

The area is large and diverse stretching across West Cheshire. This represents a significant challenge to a single focussed growth strategy for the area. Notwithstanding the core themes of Rural Housing, Environment and Sense of Place, Connectivity and Accessibility and Skills, Employability and Education will remain central to the strategy and resonate both at CWaC and Cheshire and Warrington levels but also with the three other programme areas.

The Rural Growth Board has developed a series of immediate, medium and longer terms actions under each of the strategic themes for delivery (annexed to this document) over the next 12 to 18 months, and these will be reviewed on a regular, 12 monthly basis. Within these actions are some major projects that will continue to be developed. Some of the actions clearly incorporate activity within the other area programmes and closer working with the Chester Growth Partnership, Mid Cheshire Development Board and the Ellesmere Port Development Board will be key.

### Market Towns

Going forward a greater acknowledgement of the role of market towns, and indeed other towns outside of the rural programme area, would be beneficial, with perhaps some consideration given to some representation on the Board with a sub-area spatial remit (such as specific Market Towns, or perhaps north, central and south, provided the emphasis is on the inter-relations between rural and urban) – covering for example transport, access to services, sense of place and so on. This would perhaps better reflect the 'mosaic' nature of the rural and market towns area. Close working with colleagues in the CWaC Rural Locality team could be supported by the development of a bespoke Market Town strategy (where they do not exist).

### Collaboration

The Rural Area and Market Towns are the backbone to West Cheshire, creating the character and quality of life offer that is quintessentially 'Cheshire'. Similarly it is home to a number of important specialisms and a skilled workforce. Collaboration with the LEP and importantly the three other Programme Areas will be important and beneficial to further growth in the rural areas. This is in part around presenting the merit of an increasingly clear, integrated West Cheshire investment proposition able to be presented at regional and national level drawing together the complementary offer.

However it is also about benefiting from the industrial and affordable housing offer of Ellesmere Port; the City scale and destination of Chester and from Mid Cheshire's strategic gateway role and its complementary food and drink sector. The diversity, strength and importance of the rural economy both on its own and in support of the major centres will enable the rural area and market towns to take its part confidently in this partnership work. Collaboration will be key to the development of a sustainable investment case for enhanced rail and bus connections.

### Business and Enterprise

The Rural Area and Market Towns are home to a diverse range of businesses, many of which are in key, growing, innovating sectors – this is underpinned in part by the agricultural



## Appendix 1: Facts and Figures

Key facts and figures for the Rural area						
	Rural Area and Market Towns		CWaC		England	
Total number of jobs	40,617		155,089		24,299,908	

Indicator	Rural Area and Market Towns		CWaC		England	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
<b>Population</b>						
0 – 15	19,700	17%	58,300	18%	10,303,600	19%
16-64	69,100	58%	206,400	62%	34,475,400	63%
65+	29,800	25%	67,600	20%	9,537,700	18%
Total Population	118,500	100%	332,200	100%	54,316,600	n/a
Economically Active (2011 Census) (16-74)	59,393	69%	170,778	70%	27,183,134	70%

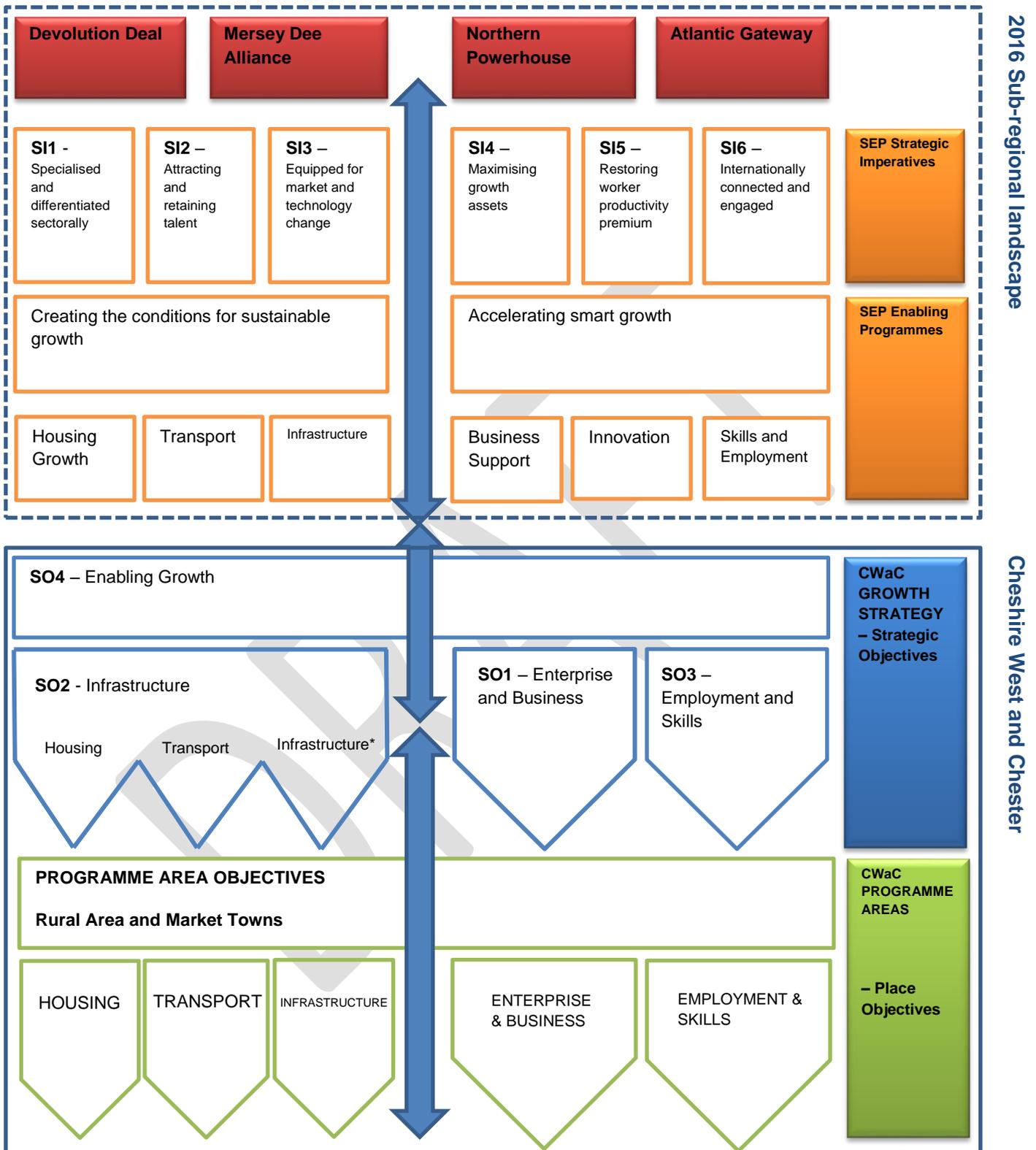
Indicator	Rural Area and Market Towns		CWaC		England	
<b>Key Sectors (as a percentage of the total jobs available)<sup>5</sup></b>						
Wholesale and retail trade	13%		18%		16%	
Total Manufacturing	11%		8%		8%	
Visitor Economy	10%		9%		7%	
Professional, Scientific and Technical	9%		8%		8%	
Education	9%		9%		9%	
Transport and Storage	6%		4%		5%	
Manufacturing: Food products	4%		1%		1%	
Manufacturing: Other non-metallic minerals	2%		1%		1%	
Agriculture	<1%		1%		1%	

Indicator	Rural Area and Market Towns		CWaC		England	
<b>Skills and Qualifications (16 and over)<sup>6</sup></b>						
No Qualifications	18,136	18%	56,940	21%	9,656,810	22%
Highest level of qualification: Level 3: 2+ A levels / advanced GNVQ or equivalent)	11,529	12%	35,042	13%	5,309,631	12%
Highest level of qualification: Level 4: Degree or Higher Degree (e.g. MA, PGCE)	35,034	36%	79,712	29%	11,769,361	27%

<sup>5</sup> Source: BRES 2014

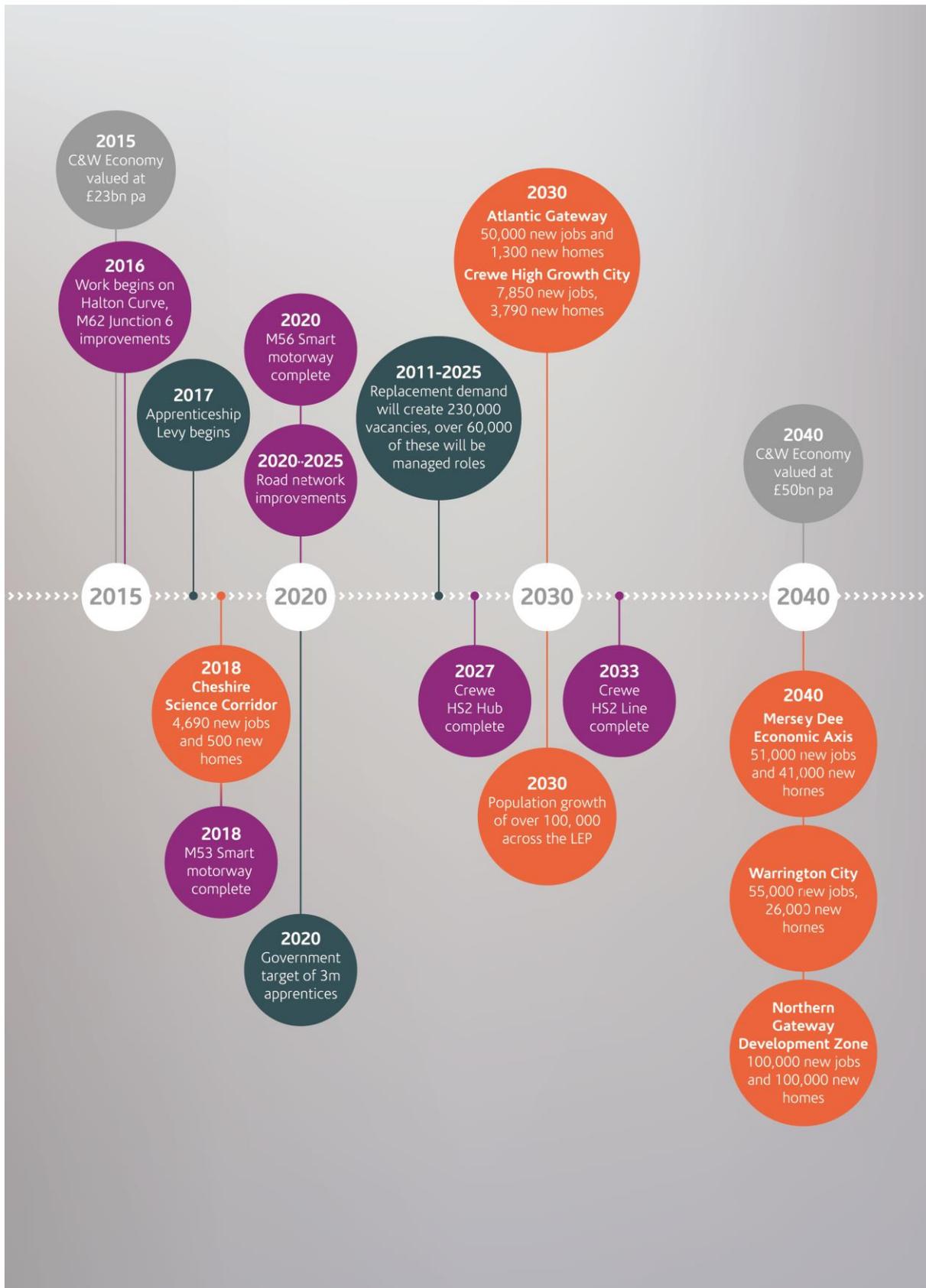
<sup>6</sup> Source: Census data 2011

## Appendix 2: Strategic Policy Context



\* For SO2 infrastructure other than housing and transport includes but is not limited to: property, place, assets, capital projects, digital connectivity, environment and green infrastructure.

### Appendix 3: Sub-regional Timeline



## Appendix 4: Achievements

Theme	Achievement	Contribution
Housing	Rural Housing Symposium #1 & #2 events held	Understanding of <b>rural housing need</b> , aspirations and barriers to delivery.
	The above events resulted in a partner hosting a 'Meet the Developer' event	Provided an opportunity for networking and matching between villages and housing developers. Board Members and Officers co-ordinated good attendance from our rural areas and attended event.
	Establishment of a housing sub group	Working on identifying evidence base to support the housing needs in the rural area.
	Joint creation of a Rural Housing Delivery group and achievement of the Rural Growth Board as a key stakeholder.	Ensuring the rural area has a 'voice' in the relation to the development of local development policy and the wider sub-region.
Transport	Engaged with CWaC Transport team.	To ensure funding for transport initiatives are benefitting the Rural Area such as study on A51 capacity issues
	Opening of new Sustrans cycle route	Providing a cycle route linking Deeside to Neston.
	Extension to Hooton Station car park	Created 140 new spaces at this rail Park and Ride site.
Infrastructure	Supporting the delivery of the Neston public realm and Neston Public Art s106 project	Developing the <b>sense of place</b> in Neston, a key market town.
	Connecting Cheshire – key stakeholder in the partnership	Deploying <b>superfast broadband</b> across Cheshire and Warrington
Enterprise & Business	Sandstone Ridge Trust – Heritage Lottery Funding - Ridge Rocks Springs	Developing the legacy of the <b>HLF funded</b> Habitats and Hillforts landscape partnership scheme and supporting the Sandstone Ridge Trust with their activities.
	Neston Public Realm	Facilitating delivery of Neston Public Realm (s106)
	Northern Marches LEADER Programme delivery 2007 - 2013	Accountable body for Northern Marches <b>LEADER</b> programme.
	LEADER Transition programme 2014	Secured funding to transition between European programmes
	LEADER Programme Cheshire & Warrington – funding secured for 5 year programme during 2015	Accountable body for both programmes (East & West). Local Action Group status for Rural Growth Board. Pan Cheshire programme 2015 – 2020, total programme <b>investment £6m</b>
	40th Sandstone Trail event	Supporting work regarding sustainability – marketing plans, signposting funding opportunities, and engaging a <b>graduate management trainee</b> to assist with work to gain

		AONB status.
	Harthill HUB	Supported with <b>network and funding opportunities</b> including draft bid assessment.
	Funding Advice Service	Providing ad hoc <b>funding advice to support local businesses.</b>
<b>Employment &amp; Skills</b>	Two times successful British Horseracing Authority grant applications	Formation of Cheshire Racing Hub (partners from education and local equine business). Enabled Inward Investment into area. Second application currently in progress undertaking <b>career development opportunities</b> for local school/college/university students, engaging with local race yards and equine vets.
	Food Chain/Innovators network	Facilitating food network for Cheshire supporting food procurement event and scoping the potential for more active local procurement.
	Saltscape	HLF funding gained – now part of steering group to ensure its success and legacy.
	Neston Economic Plan	Study completed to assess the economic potential of Neston Town Centre.
	Delamere Landscape Partnership	Continue to support and sit on Steering Committee, to plan works and to award contracts for phases of overall project.
<b>Other</b>	Establishment and administration of the Rural Support Grant	<b>£812k invested</b> in projects since 2012, totally £2.8m overall total project cost.
	Establishment and continued engagement of the Rural Growth Board	Majority of founding Rural Board members are continuing to support and champion growth in rural areas.

## Appendix 5: Key documents

The below is a list of useful references and is not exhaustive.

Planning Policy documents:

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG)  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>  
<http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk/>
- Cheshire West and Chester Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies (adopted 2015) and Local Plan Map  
[http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc\\_ldf/adopted\\_cwac\\_lp/lp\\_1\\_adopted?tab=files](http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/adopted_cwac_lp/lp_1_adopted?tab=files)  
<http://maps.cheshire.gov.uk/cwac/localplan/#>
- Supplementary Planning Documents, Supplementary Planning Guidance, development briefs and design statements  
[http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc\\_ldf/adopted\\_cwac\\_lp/chester\\_lp\\_29115?tab=files](http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/portal/cwc_ldf/adopted_cwac_lp/chester_lp_29115?tab=files)
- Neighbourhood Plans  
<http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=15712>

Other documents:

- Growth Plan: National and Sub-Regional Context (2016) (document not published)
- Cheshire West and Chester Growth Strategy “Altogether Better Growth Strategy” (2016) (document not published)
- “Altogether Better for Business: An Economic Growth Strategy for West Cheshire 2013-2018” Review 2013-15 (March 2015)
- Cheshire West and Chester Rural Regeneration Strategy and Action Plan (2011)  
<http://www.ruralwestcheshire.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/CWCC-Rural-Regeneration-Strategy-and-Action-Plan-September-2011-Final.pdf>
- Cheshire West and Chester Rural Housing Strategy (2011)  
[http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your\\_council/policies\\_and\\_performance/council\\_plans\\_and\\_strategies/planning\\_policy/local\\_plan/background\\_documents.aspx](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your_council/policies_and_performance/council_plans_and_strategies/planning_policy/local_plan/background_documents.aspx)
- Cheshire West and Chester Corporate Plan 2016 (document not published)
- Cheshire West and Chester Local Transport Plan 2011-2026  
[http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your\\_council/policies\\_and\\_performance/council\\_plans\\_and\\_strategies/local\\_transport\\_plan\\_2011-2026.aspx](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your_council/policies_and_performance/council_plans_and_strategies/local_transport_plan_2011-2026.aspx)  
[http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial\\_planning/cheshire\\_east\\_local\\_plan/local\\_plan\\_consultations/town\\_strategies\\_2012/middlewich\\_town\\_strategy.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/local_plan_consultations/town_strategies_2012/middlewich_town_strategy.aspx)
- Neston Economic Plan (January 2016)  
[http://nestontowncouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/TC6-111-NestonEconomicPlanIssued\\_January2016.pdf](http://nestontowncouncil.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/TC6-111-NestonEconomicPlanIssued_January2016.pdf)
- Strategic and Economic Plan for Cheshire and Warrington (SEP)  
<http://www.871candwep.co.uk/resources/strategic-economic-plan-and-growth-plan-for-cheshire-and-warrington/>
- Mersey Dee Alliance Spatial Strategy  
<http://www.merseydealliance.org.uk/spatial-strategy/>
- Northern Transport Strategy: Spring 2016  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/northern-transport-strategy-spring-2016>
- Atlantic Gateway Business Plan (July 2012)  
<http://www.atlanticgateway.co.uk/assets/downloads/ag-businessplan.pdf>
- Cheshire Science Corridor Strategic Priorities

- <http://www.871candwep.co.uk/strategic-priorities/science-corridor/>  
Crewe High Growth City: “All Change for Crewe: High Growth City” (September 2013)  
<https://moderngov.cheshireeast.gov.uk/documents/s25052/All%20Change%20for%20Crewe%20-%20High%20Growth%20City%20-%20Appendix.pdf>
- Gateway to the Northern Powerhouse: Cheshire & Warrington Devolution - A Growth Deal Bid Summary  
[http://www.candwleadersboard.org.uk/dbimsgs/Devo%20Bid%20Summary%20FINAL\(1\).pdf](http://www.candwleadersboard.org.uk/dbimsgs/Devo%20Bid%20Summary%20FINAL(1).pdf)
- Warrington New City: ‘Lessons from the past – driving the future’ (TCPA September 2015)  
[http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Events/New\\_Towns\\_Conference\\_/Andy\\_Farrall.pdf](http://www.tcpa.org.uk/data/files/Events/New_Towns_Conference_/Andy_Farrall.pdf)

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## Appendix 7: Board Members

<b>Name</b>	<b>Role</b>
<b>Katrina Michel</b>	Chief Executive, Marketing Cheshire
<b>Cllr Louise Gittins</b>	Cheshire West and Chester Council
<b>Andrew Hull</b>	Chair, Sandstone Ridge Trust
<b>Rev Canon David Felix</b>	Vicar, All Saints Daresbury ( <b>Chair</b> )
<b>Chris Brown Bolton</b>	Chartered Surveyor, Chris Brown-Bolton Associates
<b>Stuart Roberts</b>	SFR Farming Ltd
<b>Annette McDonald</b>	Reaseheath College
<b>Matthew Morris</b>	Estate Manager, Bolesworth Estate
<b>Cllr Harry Tonge</b>	Cheshire West and Chester Council
<b>Jonathan Fell</b>	Director, Cheshire Farm Ice Cream
<b>Edwin Christmas</b>	Estate Director, Grosvenor Estates

## Appendix 8: Rural Area and Market Towns Action Plan

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