



Cheshire and Warrington
Local Enterprise Partnership

Delivery Plan 2023/2024

19th April 2023



Chair's Foreword

The role of the Cheshire & Warrington LEP throughout 2023/2024 will focus on continuing to support our Local Authorities, national Government and businesses to achieve our mission of becoming the *“the healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive and growing economy in the UK.”*

Government have stated that there will be significant funding changes for LEPs for 2024/25 with the intention that LEP responsibilities will transfer into Local Authorities and core funding will end. The team and the board will be working over the course of the year to ensure this transfer is undertaken in a collaborative way and continue to work towards meeting our ambitious goals.

Though there will undoubtedly be challenges to overcome and a change to how we do things the LEP remains committed to delivering the actions and outputs set out in this plan and will

continue to ensure the private sector voice is central to everything we do.



Summary of The LEP's Key Objectives for 2023/2024

Economic Strategy

Ensuring a robust Sustainable & Inclusive Economic Plan for the Sub-Region.

Net Zero

To maximise the economic opportunity of decarbonisation for Cheshire and Warrington.

Business Growth

Focus on growth, innovation & intelligence

Growth Corridors

To maximise economic growth by facilitating investment, unlocking and accelerating development in the Science Corridor and from HS2.

Local Transport

Influence the development of integrated transport systems, such that they support delivery of the priorities and outcomes of the Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Plan

Digital Connectivity

Beginning to address the barriers to connectivity; Infrastructure (Supply), Skills, Capability, Affordability (Demand)

Employers' Skills , Education & Employment

- Reduce attainment gaps of disadvantaged young people
- Reduce number of long-term unemployed/ economically inactive
- Increase number of people with higher level technical skills

Marketing Cheshire

Focus is maintaining delivery and achieving progress, while recruiting a new Managing Director.

The Pledge

Secure funding to build on momentum, in line with the mandate from the Pledge Review and local labour market analysis, and puts employers at the heart of inspiring the next generation.

Programme

Continue to develop and monitor Evergreen and Life Sciences Funds

Develop Skills Bootcamps.

Corporate

Facilitating a smooth and successful transfer for the LEP's functions to the local authorities



Economic Strategy

Strategic & Thought Leadership

Coordination of economic priorities with neighbouring areas to share good practice and influence government/other stakeholders to secure progress:

- Mersey Dee Alliance
- Greater Manchester
- Liverpool City Region
- CLGU

Natural Capital & Rural Economy – facilitating coordinated strategic sustainable and inclusive economic / SIGC input to environmental planning and projects:

- Nature North (North West, North East and Yorkshire and Humber)
- Local Nature Partnership C&W
- Rural Strategy Group C&W

Inform the research and policy programme to convey C&W sustainable and inclusive economic priorities and influence the Northern economic programme.

Economic Expertise

Support the local authority Leaders' priorities and subregional activity, including:

- Development and consultation on a C&W Fair Employment Charter
- Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission (SIGC)
 - Finalise and gain approval for the delivery plan, including implementation of governance arrangements
 - Begin delivery and move into the monitoring phase
 - Continue promotion of SIGC key messages
- Exploring advantages of alternative organisational arrangements for the delivery of these priorities

Delivery Excellence

Cocreate, engage, consult on and publish Cheshire and Warrington Sustainable & Inclusive Economic Plan (SIEP).

Development of public affairs plan to unlock and deliver sustainable and inclusive economic priorities, including supporting innovation, with the aim to influence Government and industry to invest.

Policy & Planning

Ensuring a robust Sustainable & Inclusive Economic Plan for the Sub-Region.



Net Zero

Strategic & Thought Leadership

Cheshire and Warrington collaboration on wider agenda for Net Zero both regionally and locally to share good practice and influence government/other stakeholders to secure progress:

DESNZ

- NP11 Net Zero North
- Net Zero North West
- Anaerobic Digestion (AD)/BECCS
- Local Authority Climate Emergencies
- Sustainable and Inclusive Growth Commission
- Other stakeholder activity

Economic Expertise

North West Route to Net Zero engagement/comms (COP26 Legacy Programme):

- Youth Climate Network
- Collaboration on Leaders' meetings/events
- Wider stakeholder/community events with Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region, Lancashire, Cumbria and Cheshire and Warrington

Supporting Net Zero Innovation and Investment delivery

Convening of net zero communications stakeholders as appropriate

Delivery Excellence

North West Net Zero Hub local (C&W) programme: Development of a pipeline of investment projects, allocation of project development and feasibility funding £100k pa+, coordination of local authority subregional Climate Group, monitoring of funding, engagement with DESNZ on policy groups.

North West Net Zero Hub Regional (NW) Industrial Decarbonisation Programme: Recruit Staff Resource 1FTE x 2yr and deliver £50k consultancy work to progress towards a delivery plan

Policy & Planning

To meet decarbonisation goals and maximise the economic opportunity of decarbonisation for Cheshire and Warrington



Business Growth

Strategic & Thought Leadership

Close liaison with new DfBT department, to help shape the role of LEPs and Growth Hubs / Sub-regional business support

Strengthen links to the Enterprise Zone & other growth clusters to better understand their needs & influence partners to develop appropriate support offers (e.g. innovation, net zero)

Economic Expertise

Develop 'Right Investment, Right Company' approach - focus on growth sectors/clusters

Support development of and facilitate access to a finance model, that allows SMEs in the sub-region to access funding for innovation and growth

Delivery Excellence

DfBT contracted outputs & delivery of core Growth Hub function (details TBC)

- Inbound enquiry handling
 - Provision of information, diagnostic services & brokerage services to businesses
 - Delivery consultancy support in response to emerging business needs & gaps
- Multi-channel business communications to allow businesses to self-serve
- Maintain LEP's business support services databases and maintenance of business networks (Business representative organisations, Regional Growth Hub Network etc.) to ensure local, regional and national business support business intelligence is kept up to date, shared and can be acted upon.

Obtain local business intelligence through design, delivery and analysis of business surveys (quarterly)
Distribution of current local business insights to shape and influence business support offers and priorities.

Develop suite of support for SMEs to plan and implementing changes towards net zero :

- Information advice & guidance
- Carbon toolkits/trackers
- SME service support

Develop and maintain suite of support and information resources for start-ups within Cheshire & Warrington

Develop web-based and other vectors/tools for enquiry handling, data capture and access to basic business support offers (e.g. start-up, GOV & SPF programme signposting)

Develop an inward investment strategy & account management approach for investment and/or expansion

Policy & Planning

Focus on Growth, Innovation & Intelligence.

DfBT Funding not yet confirmed for Growth Hub

Growth Corridors

Strategic & Thought Leadership

Influence DfT, DLUHC, Homes England and the IPA to invest in the sub-region to unlock and accelerate development.

Board Member on the Warrington and Crewe Town Boards – which includes responsibility for the deployment of the town funds.

Economic Expertise

Maximise the economic impact of HS2 across the sub-region by supporting local authority partners to develop propositions for:

- Crewe HS2 Hub
- Chester City Gateway
- Warrington Bank Quay
- Winsford Depot

Undertake economic impact assessment of HS2 and Mid-Cheshire Line across the Mid-Cheshire area (October)

Support local authorities and Homes England to:

- refresh the sub-regional housing pipeline (June)
- identify a set of priority sites (June)
- develop robust business cases for future Homes England investment (March)

Support the delivery of the industrial decarbonisation roadmap and net zero projects

Delivery Excellence

Work with the life sciences, animal life sciences and nuclear sectors in the Cheshire Science Corridor to identify and develop strategies to improve their profile and competitiveness.

Refresh and relaunch the Cheshire Science Corridor Brand and marketing proposition, including a re-launch event (September).

Organise and represent the sub-region at UKREIIF (May 2023).

Policy & Planning

To maximise economic growth by facilitating investment, unlocking and accelerating development in the Science Corridor and from HS2.



Local Transport

Strategic & Thought Leadership

Continue to engage with Government & Rail Industry to articulate and press for priorities and integrated solutions (as set out in the West and Wales prospectus) with a particular focus on maximising the benefits of HS2 to the sub-region and North Wales (on-going):

Engage across boundaries to ensure neighbouring plans and sub-national strategies take account of Cheshire and Warrington priorities, focussing on:

- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- Transport for Wales
- Transport for the North

Engage with National Highways on Route Strategies to ensure that they support local priorities, especially in terms of network reliability, resilience and capacity. (on-going)

- Work with the Local Authorities to promote and support access to rail stations by sustainable modes & delivery of local cycling and walking improvement plans

Continue to work with and support Transport Advisory Group to:

- identify sub-regional issues, outcomes and priorities (on-going)
- share best practice (on-going)
- develop options for establishing the Local Transport Board as a sub-regional board to assist with identifying and agreeing sub-regional priorities for transport (to be aligned with wider discussions on sub-regional working)

Economic Expertise

Work with the Local Authorities to continue development of sub-regional options for bus service improvement for levelling up, following up on the Local Authorities' bus service improvement plans.

This activity will be aligned with the timetable for development of the sub-regional transport strategy.

Work with Transport Advisory Group to develop advice for the Local Authorities' Growth Directors on potential use of Enterprise Zone funding to support understanding of transport issues and development of appropriate solutions.

This activity will be aligned with the timetable for development of the sub-regional transport strategy.

Delivery Excellence

Develop a sub-regional transport strategy to support the Sustainable Inclusive Economic Plan:

- Assess current baseline post Covid-19 and review of current strategy (June/July 2023)
- Understand key issues and challenges (September 2023)
- Identify priorities and timescale for delivery (December 2023)

Support transport studies and development of business cases to ensure that the sub-region has schemes ready to bid for government funding.

Policy & Planning

Influence the development of integrated transport systems, such that they support delivery of the priorities and outcomes of the Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Plan

Digital Connectivity

Strategic & Thought Leadership

Identify priority areas for infrastructure improvement (broadband and mobile).

Work with Connecting Cheshire on delivery through existing gain share and BD UK Project Gigabit procurement.

Understanding Barriers to Digital Connectivity:

- Evaluate the position paper / study identifying supply and demand issues
- Prioritise actions to address issues
- Digital infrastructure plan review (data refresh)

Exploration of commercial models & funding streams:

- Opportunities and timescales of BDUK
- Pipeline of public sector “backbone” schemes
- Identification of “dig once” opportunities
- Levelling up pitch

Policy & Planning

Beginning to address the barriers to connectivity; Infrastructure (Supply), Skills, Capability, Affordability (Demand)



Employers' Skills, Education & Employment

Strategic & Thought Leadership

Work with partners (Employers, Local Authorities, Local Skills Improvement Plan Governance Board, DfE, Careers Enterprise Company, DWP) to address key objectives: All objectives to be delivered will incorporate the underpinning issues, all identified by the local data and labour market intelligence (DLMI):

Convene working groups to address these objectives, ensuring clear action plans / KPIs, including the Into Work Board, Economic & Workforce Recovery Group.

Ensure Cheshire & Warrington objectives and interests are reflected in skills, education and employment policies at national and sub-regional level to maximise local impact. Identify synergies and look to join up Government policies at a local level.

(UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Local Skills Improvement Plan, Careers Enterprise Company, DfE, DWP, Fair Employment Charter, DSIT, Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Programme)

Identify national expertise and good practice to improve delivery in Cheshire and Warrington, and subsequently influencing our key policies, programmes and delivery partners to evolve e.g. via the LEP network, DSIT.

Economic Expertise

- Facilitate partners (via the Data & Labour Market Steering Group) to continue to provide and share high quality DLMI and commission evidence to inform and influence:
- Deliver a new commission to inform the LSIP – IFATE (instate for apprenticeships and technical education (Q1)
- Deliver an updated labour market assessment focused on key geographic areas (23 towns), facilitate the development of place-based plans.
- Continue to facilitate & support The Cheshire & Warrington Opportunities Portal, ensuring all sub-regional job and training opportunities provide a single source of information for all businesses, residents and training providers.

Ensure DLMI is accessible, including via:

- National Careers Service (quarterly)
- Jobcentre Plus (fortnightly)
- Growth Hub's network (quarterly)

Facilitate and support communities of good practice to build capacity and share case studies, with focus on the following topics throughout the year:

- Care Sector
- Retrofit
- Ofsted inspection of Skills Bootcamps
- Digital Inclusion

Delivery Excellence

Provide oversight and support of Skills Bootcamp Programme, with a strong emphasis on digital for employed and unemployed, including DLMI.

Policy & Planning

3 key objectives

- *Reduce attainment gaps of disadvantaged young people*
- *Reduce number of long-term unemployed/ economically inactive*
- *Increase number of people with higher level technical skills*

Marketing Cheshire

Strategic & Thought Leadership

Visitor Economy: Obtain Local Visitor Economy Partnership (LVEP) Status (April),

Visitor Economy: Deliver, by March, a review of visitor information (March)

Visitor Economy: Develop a Growth Plan in partnership with Visit England

Visitor Economy: Refresh the Destination Management Plan

Place Marketing: Continue to raise the profile of Cheshire & Warrington as place to invest.

Economic Expertise

Growth of partnership and business account management, to provide research and insights

Delivery Excellence

Visitor Economy: Work with Destination Cheshire network to deliver high impact visitor marketing campaigns, including:

- Developing a refreshed C&W place narrative and marketing strategy (Brand launch by July)
- Cheshire Day (March)
- Grow visits to the website and obtain destination PR impact of £100m

Visitor Economy: Work with Destination Chester to deliver annual programme of city focused campaigns and PR, in partnership with transport providers.

Place Marketing:

- Launch Cheshire Science Corridor re-brand, including websites and assets:
 - Attend UK REiiF, as a joint Cheshire and Warrington presence (May)
 - Symposium event (September).
 - Recruit ambassadors from within the Science Corridor

LEP Corporate:

- Deliver programme of strategic PR and Public Affairs activity, linked to LEP priority areas.
- Transition away from reliance on Social (Dec).
- Deliver impactful AGM.

Marketing Cheshire

Focus is maintaining delivery and achieving progress, while recruiting a new Managing Director.

The Pledge – From Sept 23

Strategic & Thought Leadership

Through the Pledge network, influence employer practice utilising the CEC Employer Standards and Cheshire and Warrington Fair Employment Charter, so that they build an inclusive talent pipeline aligned to the LEP vision.

Strategic engagement with headteachers and governors to improve the resourcing and prioritisation of careers.

Work with leaders across 84 schools/colleges, to embed careers as a strategic approach that drives improved outcomes for young people.

Support careers leaders, curriculum teachers and wider staff community from 84 schools/colleges to share practice and collaborate, in order to build capacity and sustainability, broaden influence and deepen impact.

Economic Expertise

Build on momentum achieved to continue raising standards of careers education as evidenced by Gatsby Benchmark progress and support compliance with provider access legislation to help all young people to achieve their best next step. Achieve CEC funded KPI's TBC W/C 17th April eg:

- Achieve average of 5 Gatsby Benchmarks
- 100% achieving minimum of 3 Gatsby Benchmarks
- 80% achieve Gatsby Benchmark 1
- Progress in Gatsby Benchmark 5 and 6

Work in partnership with schools, colleges, employers, Local Authorities, and other key partners, to support priorities around economic growth and school improvement, including a focus on tackling disadvantage through building capacity, facilitating targeted intervention and influencing practice.

Support employers to deliver meaningful work experience, take on apprentices, promote vacancies and deliver mock assessment centres, so they build an inclusive talent pipeline, which supports economic growth.

Work with employers to develop innovative Teacher Encounters to upskill educators about local employer needs and help inform the curriculum.

Work with employers and educators, to amplify technical and vocational routes for young people (e.g. T-Levels, Apprenticeships).

Support LAs and schools/colleges to be compliant with Provider Access Legislation.

Delivery Excellence

Establish a calendar of events based on best practice from 2022/23, in line with future priorities, to put employers at the heart of inspiring young people (influenced by Partner priorities review and funding)

Deliver funding related outcomes (TBC based on funding decisions) but likely to include:

- CEC: Gatsby benchmark progress and targeted work to address local skills and education priorities eg. NEET prevention
- Westminster Foundation: increasing social mobility in Ellesmere Port and Chester
- NHS: helping young people to understand the benefits of working in the HSC sector through outreach activity in schools and colleges
- Bank of America: helping them achieve their CSR objectives locally through targeted engagement with schools in Chester

Programme

Subject to further funding being secured: Build on momentum, in line with the Pledge Review and local labour market analysis, to continue to put employers at the heart of inspiring the next generation.

Programme & Investment

Strategic & Thought Leadership

Cheshire & Warrington Urban Development Fund:

- Facilitate final drawdowns from the ERDF into the Cheshire & Warrington Urban Development Fund (June)
- Complete initial investment period, and continue to monitor delivery of Evergreen / Urban Development Funds (December)
- Prepare for legacy funding requirements from 2024 for the Urban Development Fund
 - Proposal for legacy funding (June)
 - Update investment strategy and business plan (September)

Life Science Funds:

- Support Praetura with the expansion of the second Life Sciences Fund, including new investments & exploration of new partners
- Monitor the first Life Sciences Fund outcomes

Delivery Excellence

Cheshire Science Corridor:

- Actively manage the pipeline of investments into the Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone
- Deliver at least 3 new investments in the Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone
 - Birchwood Park, Quadrant Phase 3
 - Protos, Enviroo
 - Alderley Park Labs
 - Protos, Waste to Hydrogen Plant
- Continue to support the University of Chester, on their plans to maximise the development and opportunities at Thornton Science Park.

Deliver Skills Bootcamps:

- Monitor and support Wave 3 outcomes from Skills Bootcamps (started in 2022/23)
- Implement, monitor and support Wave 4 Skills Bootcamps (started in 2023/24)
- Facilitate & support the Skills Bootcamp training providers to be Ofsted ready, by implementing an Ofsted readiness plan
- Implement a pilot Skills Bootcamp programme for the Care Sector
- Prepare Wave 5 (2024/25) proposal for the Department for Education (October)

Continue to develop risk management approach and risk monitoring

Draft and gain approval for a Business Continuity Plan

Programme

Continue to develop and monitor Evergreen and Life Sciences Funds

Develop Skills Bootcamps.

Managing LEP transfer and ongoing Governance

Delivery Excellence

Continue to facilitate good governance and continue to make decisions swiftly, including supporting local leadership to respond to Government's consultation for the future of sub-regional economic development and transfer of LEP responsibilities.

Recruitment of MD and Head of Marketing for Marketing Cheshire.

Further develop and implement EDI action plan and Social Value reporting

- Establish an impact assessment approach and policy for investment / LEP support, that reflect the vision & SIGC recommendations.
- Identify key services and projects to trial the new policy.

Finalise programme claims ending in 2023 and facilitate all audit requirements:

- Skills Advisory Panel
- Digital Skills Partnership
- Pledge
- Skills Bootcamps

Publish Annual Report, Annual Accounts and Hold AGM

Corporate

Work with local leaders to facilitate a smooth transfer of the LEP's functions to the LAs by the end of March 2024

