

Warrington Towns Fund

Town Investment Plan

Warrington Borough Council

31st July 2020



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Executive Summary



Top left: Walton Hall & Gardens Grade II listed building. The hall and its surrounding garden and grounds are owned and administered by Warrington Borough Council

Bottom: River Reeves Foundation RivFest helping young people realise their dreams in Arts & Culture

Top Right: A procession in the Town Centre

Warrington has a reputation as a place where industry thrives; from its Victorian industrial heritage; its designation as a New Town; and more recently as a centre for science-based industries, engineering consulting, business services and logistics. Warrington benefits from strong and long-established partnership structures amongst anchor organisations that have a strong track record of delivering innovative public and private sector interventions including Time Square, a £142m Council funded mixed-use regeneration scheme in the heart of Warrington town centre. Interventions like this have created demonstrable improvements to the economic and social fabric of the town across a number of indicators (including wages, NVQ's at all levels, primary and secondary school attainment and employment).

These factors mean that Warrington is a place where businesses are born and flourish, and as a result Warrington has a confident and 'can do/will do' attitude when it comes to delivering change and is in a strong position to react in a decisive and agile way to challenges. One of the most pressing issues is climate change and the need for sustainable and inclusive economic growth to help address both the impacts already being felt and those that pose a threat to future economic success. This issue is challenging to overcome in Warrington because the town's development structure means it is highly car dependent and there are significant barriers to the use of sustainable transport modes. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated existing challenges and raised new ones, particularly around the resilience of our health service and workforce. The key issues facing Warrington (described in more detail in Section 1.3) are therefore:

- Maintaining a diverse, resilient and digitally connected workforce
- Thinking creatively about how to utilise vacant space to increase footfall and restore a vibrant town centre that acts as a community hub and attracts businesses and visitors
- Capitalising on existing investment in sustainable modes and improve linkages with green spaces to improve connectivity and health.

The Town Investment Plan describes a number of projects that have been developed to capitalise on Warrington's strengths to tackle these issues. The projects were first identified by the local community (via the MyTown website and previous engagements), then developed through an iterative process (described in the **Figure 1** below) relying heavily on the inputs from stakeholders including thematic groups made up of local businesses, councillors and other representatives, as well as the Project Board.

Figure 1 – Warrington Towns Fund – Project identification and development process

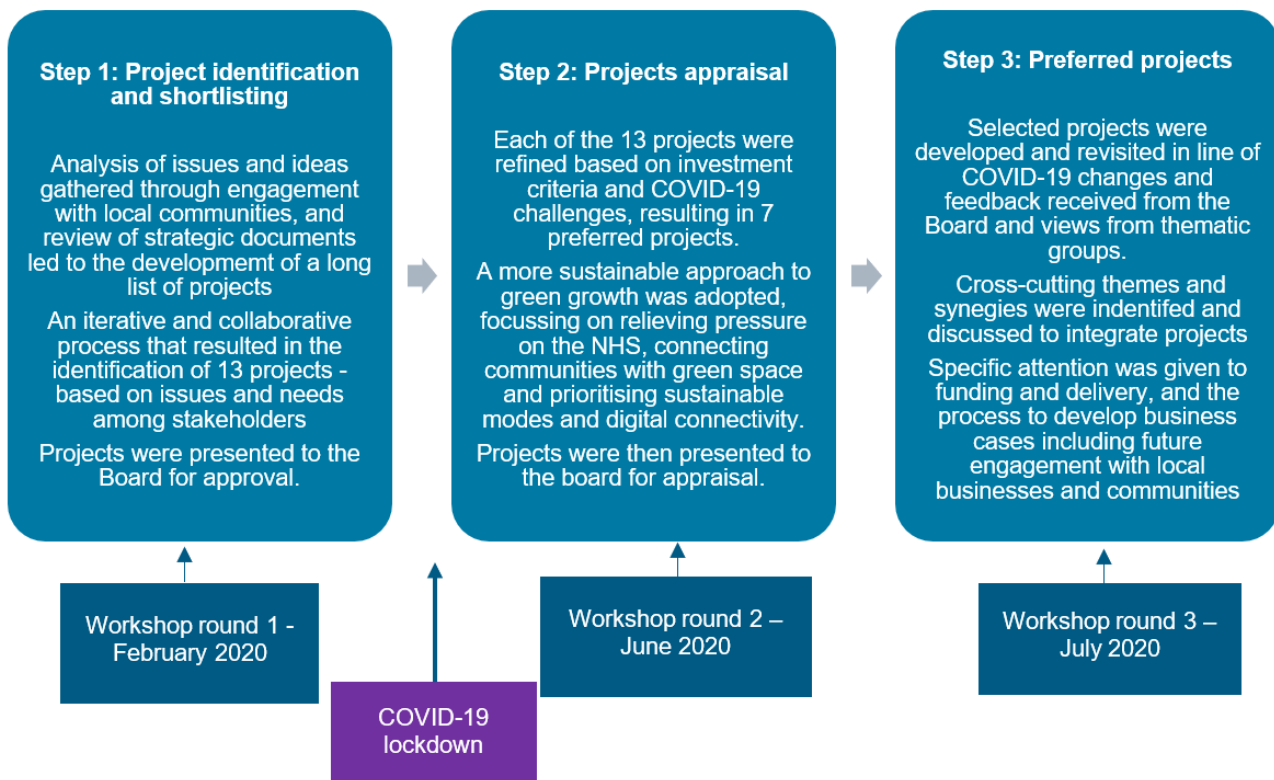


Table 1 shows the final list of projects preferred for this Town Investment Plan (TIP), the total funding ask is £26.56m. These projects are generally concentrated in the town centre, those outside will be connected to the city centre through the sustainable/active travel programme.

Table 1 – Warrington Towns Fund Deal - Ask for each project

Project	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2025/26	Total Ask
Project A - Health & Social Care Academy	£0.61m	£0.60m			£1.21m
Project B - Health & Wellbeing Hub	£0.03m	£2.06m	£1.66m		£3.75m
Project C - Advanced Construction Training Centre	£0.10m	£2.80m	£1.50m		£4.40m
Project D- All electric bus fleet depot	£0.50m	£0.50m			£1.00m
Project E - Active Travel Programme	£1.00m	£2.85m	£2.85m		£6.70m
Project F- Digital Enterprise Hub	£0.80m	£2.70m			£3.50m
Project G - Remastered Cultural Hub	£0.05m	£3.85m	£2.10m		£6.00m
Total Ask in year	£3.09m	£15.36m	£8.11m		£26.56m

The outputs created by these projects will be utilised by people of all ages and therefore the sustainable/active travel programme of walking, cycling and zero emission bus travel becomes pivotal in accessing the new facilities. This integrated approach is the embodiment of clean growth in an urban environment.

Through this investment of £26.56m, it is expected that all projects will generate a cumulative GVA of £64m and more specifically will deliver the following outcomes:

- **The Health and Social Care Academy (Project A)**, which will support workers integrating digital technology into their work to offer new service opportunities, reduce the level of shortage in health and social care and build resilience in workforce to deal with increasing demand from ageing populations.
- **The Health and Wellbeing Hub (Project B)**, which will help reducing health deprivation in the town centre and improve quality of life and accessibility to healthcare and wellbeing services for all.
- **The Advanced Construction Training Hub (Project C)**, which will develop training in low carbon building material use and sustainable building, and mitigate the economic impact of COVID-19 by providing an opportunity to reskill workforce in sectors that have declined during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **The all-electric bus depot (Project D)**, which will support the full electrification of the bus fleet and release centrally located land for sustainable housing.
- **The Active Travel programme (Project E)**, which will make the town centre more pleasant and encourage walking and cycling to replace car use.
- **The Digital Enterprise hub (Project F)**, which will support innovation in digital technologies such as gaming and increase the level of the attractiveness of Bridge Street, as the introduction to Warrington's Cultural Quarter.
- **The Remastered Cultural Hub (Project G)**, which will set up a strong digital and cultural ecosystem, improve perceptions of Warrington for its cultural offer and increase economic activities in Warrington.

The vast majority of the capital assets needed to deliver the TIP are either already in the control and ownership of WBC or its strategic partners who have been part of the development of this TIP. All TIP projects meet the deliverability checklist (Table 3-1) and can therefore be considered 'shovel ready'. It is estimated that all TIP projects will be delivered by March 2023, which is possible due to existing partnerships with stakeholders, use of existing frameworks for procurement and meeting the deliverability requirements set out in Towns Fund guidance.

Context Analysis



Top left: Copper Stills at Greenall's Distillery in Warrington

Bottom left: The Halliwell Jones Stadium

Top Right: RAF Burtonwood 1940 – 1993 the largest US Army & Airforce Base in Europe

Bottom Right: Neighbourhood Weekender – annual music festival held in Victoria park with over 35,000 people attending over 2 days

1. Context analysis

Context analysis is crucial in the process of defining and selecting projects, as the aim is to ensure that the projects are justified on a robust evidence-based analysis. A detailed context analysis can be found in **Annex C**. The following sections are discussed in this chapter:

Section 1.1 – Boundaries of the intervention area

Section 1.2 – Warrington's assets and strengths

Section 1.3 – Challenges and needs

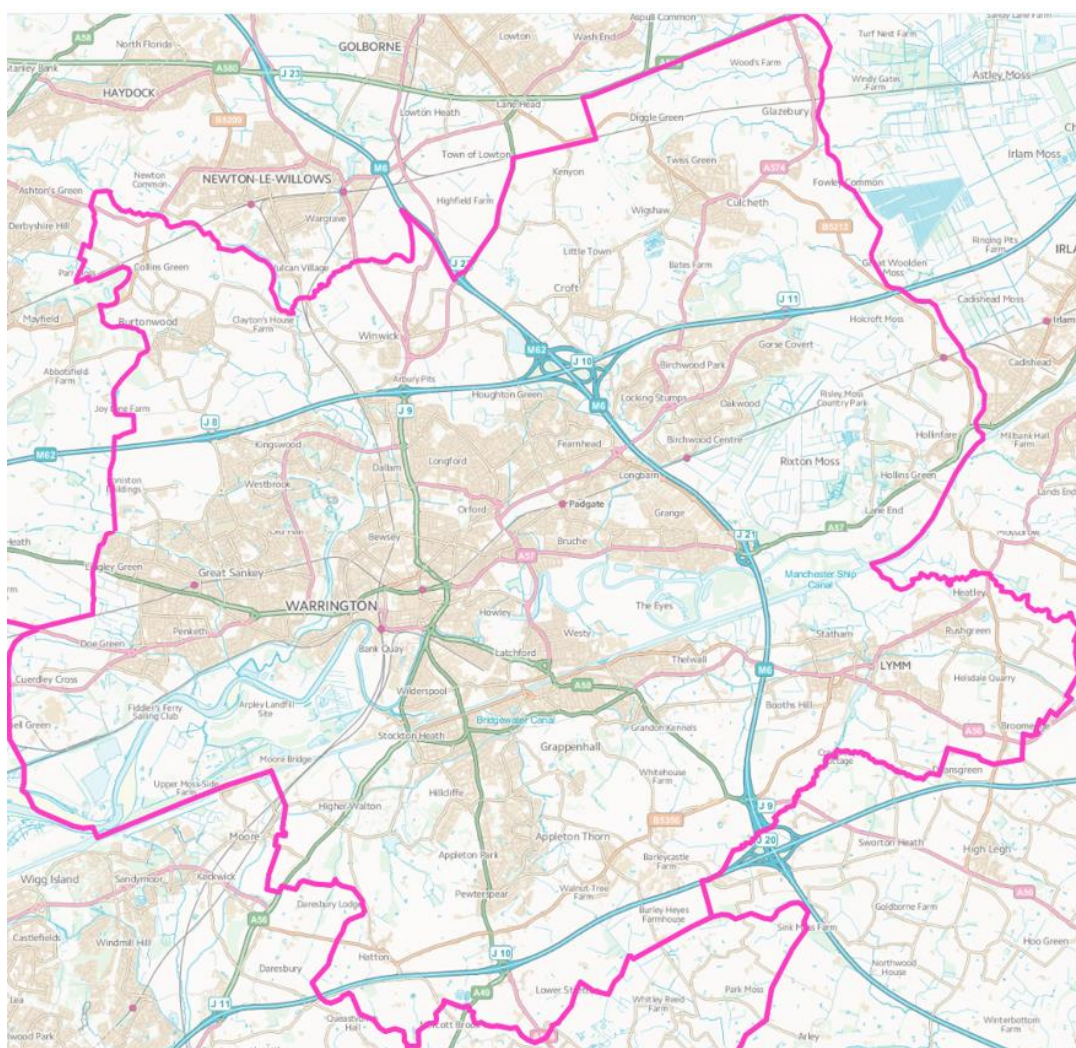
Section 1.4 – Summary

Section 1.5 – Covid-19 Assessment

1.1. Boundaries of the intervention area

Figure 1-1 below shows the boundaries of the intervention area which, as agreed with MHCLG, correspond to the entire Warrington Borough.

Figure 1-1 – Intervention area boundaries



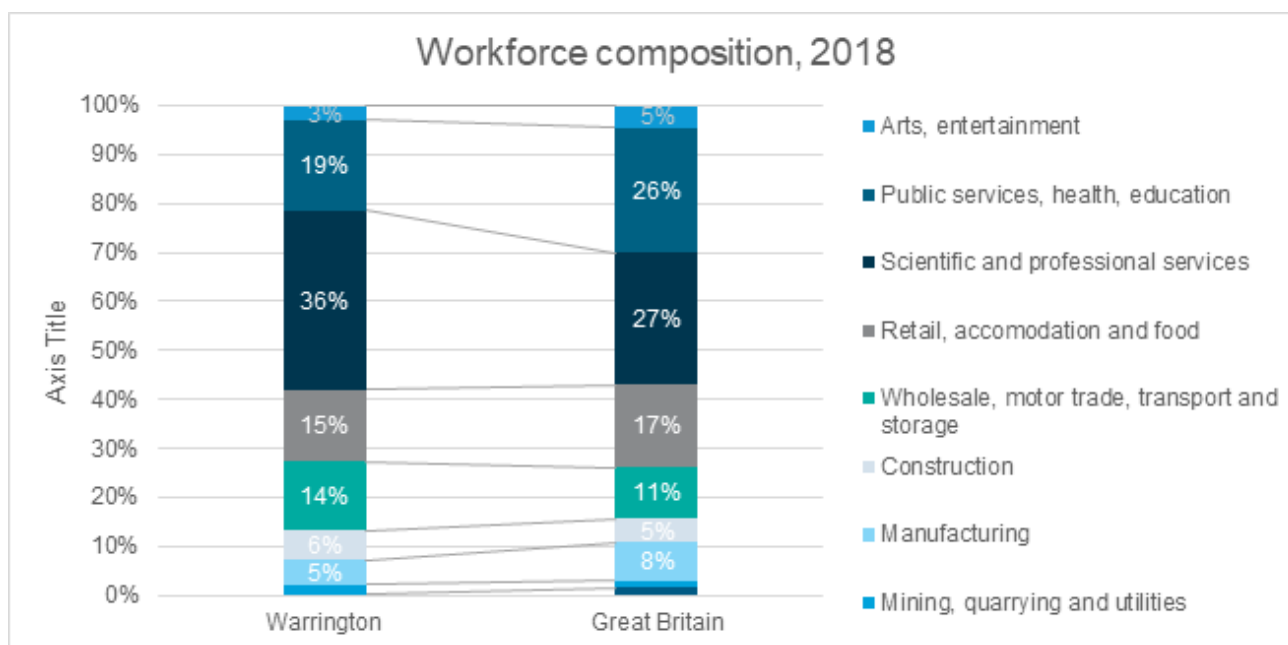
Source: Warrington Borough Council

1.2. Warrington’s assets and strengths

1.2.1. Education, skills and employment

Warrington’s economic performance shows a fast-growing economy relying on skilled-based sectors. The Borough’s Gross Value Added (GVA) has increased by 18.1% between 2008 and 2018 (in real terms), compared to 13.6% in the North West and 14.2% in the UK. More than a third (36%) of the workforce works in scientific, professional and technical services, compared to just 27% nationally, as shown in **Figure 1-2**. Not only are those activities more productive and value generating, they are also less likely to be affected by automation¹. At the same time, the main contributors to GVA are administrative and support services, wholesale and retail and manufacturing.

Figure 1-2 – Workforce composition, Warrington and Great Britain, 2018



Source: ONS, BEIS (2019)

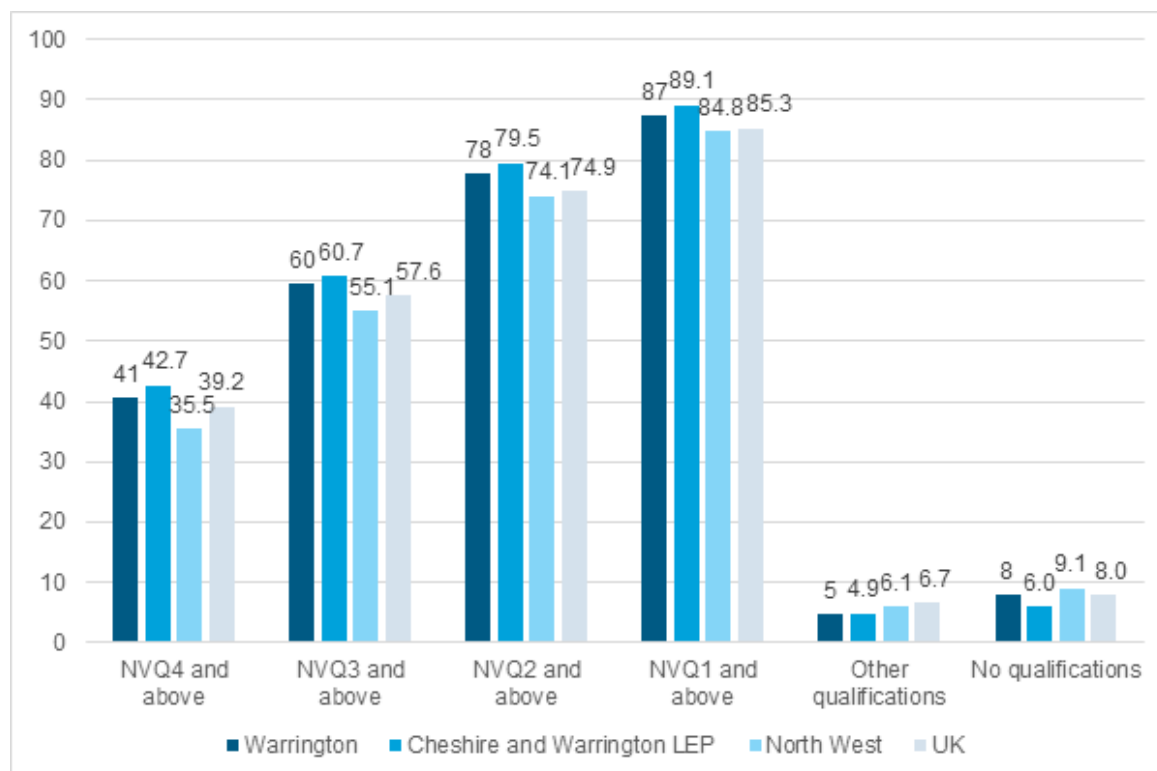
The median wages of those who live in the Borough (£596 per week for a full-time worker in 2019) is also significantly higher than on average in the North West (£556) and the UK (£585), but lower than in the wider Cheshire and Warrington LEP area (£616).²

The level of qualification among the resident population is higher than the national and regional averages, with 40.5% of the population at NVQ4 and above, but slightly lower than the Cheshire & Warrington LEP area average (42.7%) as shown on **Figure 1-3**.

¹Nesta (2017), The future of skills: employment in 2030

² ONS, Nomis

Figure 1-3 – Highest level of qualification, Warrington and comparative geographies, 2018



Source: ONS, Annual Population Survey, 2019

Warrington has two further education facilities: one General College of Further Education (Warrington and Vale Royal College) and one Sixth Form and Community College (Priestley).

The Cheshire and Warrington LEP priorities for the future include encouraging the take up of digital and STEM³ related qualifications and careers, and the reskilling and upskilling of the workforce, in particular around new technologies⁴. The LEP has developed the following four specific actions:

- **Pledge network** - an employer-led network working with secondary schools to help them develop career strategies and delivery plans. The network also helps youth groups to connect with local businesses to inspire them about new technologies and career opportunities.
- **Accelerate** - a programme to help reskilling and upskilling the existing workforce, with a focus on digital and STEM skills.
- **Digital Skills Partnership** - to support the delivery of digital skills at each level of education.
- **Investment in specialist equipment** - needed to deliver digital and STEM related skills, through the Local Growth Fund. Eight investments worth over £2 million have already been contracted.

1.2.2. Housing and infrastructure

The economic success of Warrington is closely related to its strategic location in the North West – at the centre of the Liverpool/Manchester and Cheshire Science corridors – and its infrastructure provisions. Its excellent connectivity (particularly in terms of its position on the M6/M62 and M56 strategic road network) makes the town attractive to science and logistics-related sectors specifically (see **Figure 1-4** below) .

Beyond roads, the town benefits from good rail connections (with increased capacity likely to be delivered through Northern Powerhouse Rail (NPR) and a possible connection to High Speed 2) as well as growing

³ Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths

⁴ Cheshire and Warrington LEP, *Skills and education strategic priorities*

waterway use on the Ship Canal, at Port Warrington and connecting onwards to the Port of Liverpool. NPR should make the journey from Warrington to Sunderland up to 90 minutes faster.⁵

Warrington’s location in between several employment centres (and being an employment centre itself), means that there are significant commuting inflows and outflows. In 2011, 41% of Warrington’s residents with a job worked elsewhere (16% in Greater Manchester), while conversely 49% of Warrington’s workers lived outside of the Borough.⁶

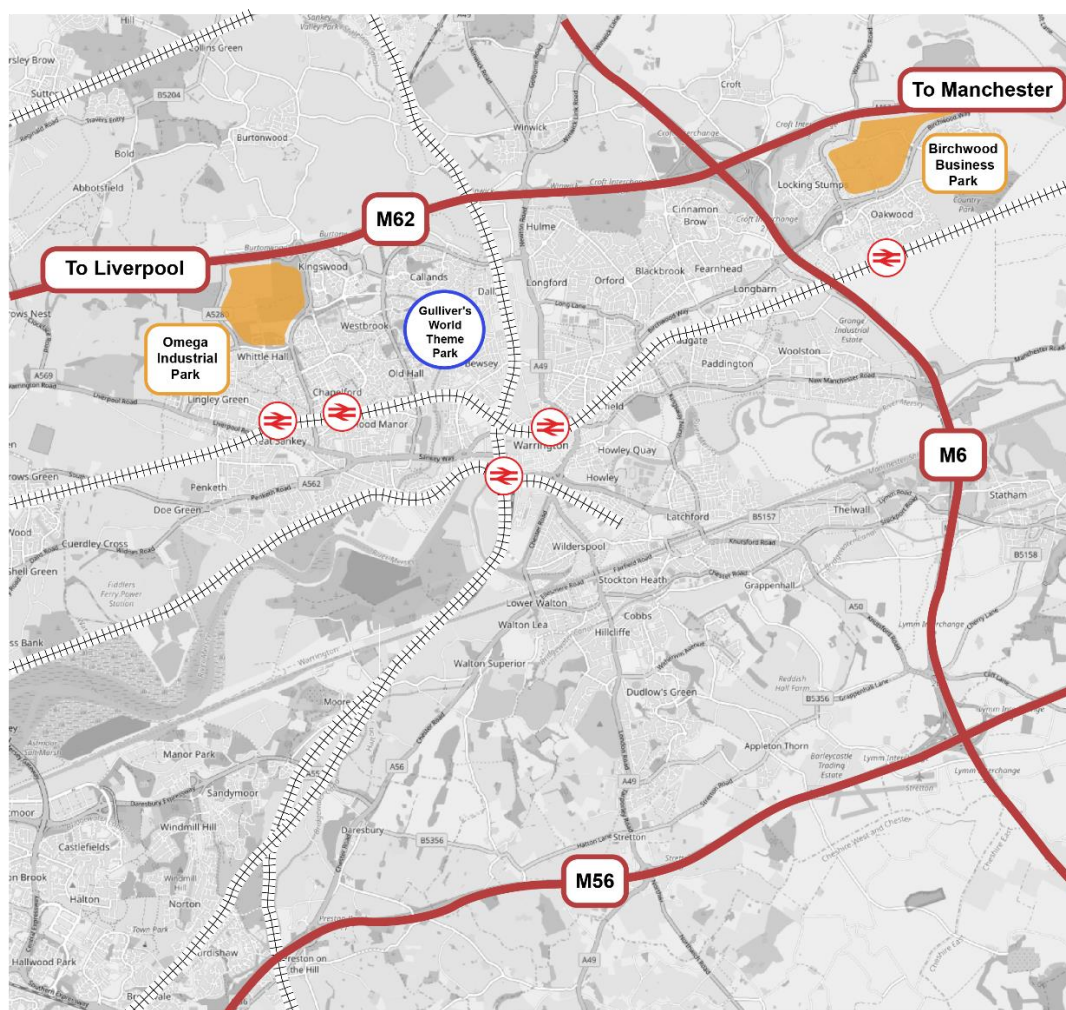
Warrington’s great asset is that the Council owns the main bus company, Warrington’s Own Buses. The company was named ‘Best small to medium-size bus company in the county’ at the Route One Awards 2019.

Regarding sustainable infrastructure, Warrington has invested in two solar farms in 2019, that will result in the Council being the first in the country to use 100% renewable energy. This investment is a clear statement of the Council’s intent to lead the way in sustainable energy provision.

Warrington is currently one of the best digitally connected areas in the UK, with 98% superfast and 75% ultrafast connectivity. New housing developments are expected to have full fibre broadband connectivity, with the significant roll out of ultrafast fibre optics coinciding with planned residential development.

However, the town needs to address a number of issues related to traffic congestion, housing supply and town centre regeneration to take full advantage of these assets, as explained in **Section 1.3.2**.

Figure 1-4 – Warrington’s context



⁵ Transport for the North (2019), *The Potential of Northern Powerhouse rail*

⁶ ONS, 2011 Census

1.2.3. Health and wellbeing

In 2011, residents overall self-reported good/very good levels of health, with 50% of the population reporting “very good” health (compared to 47% in England overall), and 33% reporting “good” health.⁷ However specific health and wellbeing outcomes score below the national average as explained in **Section 1.3.3**.

Warrington and Halton Teaching Hospitals primarily provide a full range of traditional secondary care-type services to a population of 330,000 people across the Boroughs of Warrington and Halton. The Trust delivers over 500,000 individual patient appointments, procedures, and inpatient stays each year across the Trust.

The town is one of the fastest growing in the UK, and this increase is expected to continue⁸. Equally, as the share of the population aged above 65 is large and growing, investments will be needed to ensure an equally good level of coverage and services in the future.

1.2.4. Arts, culture and digital

Warrington’s **heritage and culture** are strongly anchored in its industrial history. Over time, Warrington has become home to a cultural scene that is often placed in the shadow of its larger city neighbours of Manchester and Liverpool. Key art and cultural amenities are mostly located in the town centre, in what is commonly referred to as the Cultural Quarter. These include:

- **Warrington Museum and Art Gallery** – one of the oldest municipal museums in the country.
- **Warrington Central Library** - the UK’s first rate-supported library.
- **Parr Hall** - built in 1895 is one of the leading arts and entertainment venues in the North West, sitting in a grade-two listed building.
- **Pyramid art centre** - the most recent addition to the Cultural Quarter (2002), an art centre integrated with Parr Hall, focusing on smaller performances and community events and offering classes and meeting spaces.
- **OPUS** - a co-working space for digital and tech workers located in the Pyramid art centre that opened in March 2019.

Warrington also hosts several festivals throughout the year, which attracted approximately 160,000 in 2019. The most attended festival, the “Neighbourhood Weekender” reportedly generated £1.7million for Warrington’s economy in 2019.

The dynamic growth of Warrington in the **digital sector** is highlighted in Nesta’s 2016 report, *The Geography of Creativity*, where Warrington and Wigan are identified as high growth areas for the creative industries (using the DCMS⁹ definition). Together, the report estimates that there are:

- 1,743 creative businesses (6.1% of total businesses)
- 7,128 employment (2.2% of total employment)
- 13,869 jobs (4% of total jobs)
- £382,477 GVA (3.2% of total GVA)

The report also identifies strength in software and digital industries, and in advertising, design and architecture. It also notes the area as a digital marketing technology hotspot. Importantly, it highlights the new ‘creative conurbations’ alongside the known creative cities.

Warrington’s digital hub OPUS has counted over 2,000 visitors since 2019 and begun hosting events and talks. There are two other key employers in the industry: **Greensill**, a FinTech company offering working capital finance, and **BluePrism**, a tech company specialised in robotic process automation. Both companies offer interesting job opportunities in the sector, could foreseeably offer apprenticeships, yet have very little contact with the existing digital community in Warrington or the town itself.

⁷ ibid

⁸ ONS, Population projection

⁹ Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

A distinctive town

Warrington is older than its new town status might suggest. It was an important market town during medieval times, and particularly expanded during the industrial revolution, where its position on the River Mersey was a significant growth factor. There is considerable historical and architectural heritage, including buildings such as the Town Hall, St. Elphin's church and Warrington Museum, and 16 conservation areas including Bridge Street in the town centre.

In more recent times, the New Town designation led to growth in employment in light industrial, distribution and technology, counterbalancing the effects of deindustrialisation.

The town's location is still one of its greatest assets, being within an hour radius of Liverpool and Manchester and close to the Cheshire Corridor, with additional investment from Transport for the North likely to further improve accessibility.

It has a fast-growing economy relying on skilled-based sectors, key art and cultural amenities (known as the Cultural Quarter) and dynamic growth in digital sector.

1.3. Challenges and needs

1.3.1. Education, skills and employment

Issue 1: Low Productivity

Despite having a large workforce engaged in professional services and scientific research, Warrington's productivity is relatively low, £32.70 per hour in 2018, slightly higher than the North West average (£32.20), but below the UK average (£35) and the Cheshire and Warrington LEP area average (£37.10).

Figure 1-5 – Nominal GVA per hour worked



Source: ONS, 2018

There are two reasons for this low productivity:

- Less skill intensive activities are located in Warrington. The proportion of lower skilled occupations such as sales and customer services are higher than the average for England.
- There has been an increase in low wage sub-sectors and in part time jobs¹⁰ in the past 10 years. The number of part time employees has increased by 22.9% compared to an increase of 12% in full time employees.

Issue 2: Skills shortage and difficulty to attract graduates

Engagement with local stakeholders highlighted the existence of a skills shortage in Warrington, with a perceived mismatch between existing and required skills. Employer Skills Survey (2017) shows that 17% of

¹⁰Cheshire and Warrington LEP (2019), Labour and learning market assessment (draft version)

establishments within Cheshire and Warrington LEP area reported some staff as not fully proficient, compared to 13% for England. These skills gaps were reported in all occupation areas in the LEP, but high-skill occupation seem to be slightly more in demand.

This skills shortage issue emerges from the following three potential underlying causes:

- **Quality of existing education curriculums:** achievement rate for higher apprenticeship was only 57.3%, compared to 63.6% nationally.¹¹ Additionally, adult achievement rates in General FE colleges and Specialist Colleges, and the young people's achievement rate in private sector publicly funded providers and in sixth form colleges are all below the national averages.¹²
- **Relevance of education provided:** the type of further education and apprenticeship programmes offered locally do not align with local needs. Better partnerships between the education sector and industries are needed to rectify this.
- **Lack of attraction to graduates** competing with Manchester and Liverpool to attract graduates is difficult. There is a need to provide support to students and graduates for developing their career paths in Warrington.

Issue 3: Increasing demand for specific jobs

Engagement with stakeholders and businesses highlighted the need to prioritise the delivery of specific education to respond to future employment gaps:

- **Social care and health** - with regards to future demographic trends showing an increase of older residents.
- **Digital** - the development of digital skills being a priority of Cheshire and Warrington LEP Local Industrial Strategy.
- **Manufacturing & Construction** - two fast-evolving sectors with regards to environmental and digital innovation.

Whilst some courses in these sectors are provided by existing educational providers in Warrington, further work is needed to develop this offering to meet demand, particularly in **health & social care** and **digital skills**:

- In terms of training *quality*, current curriculums only cover a limited number of career opportunities.
- In terms of *quantity*, demographic trends suggest the need for health and social care services will increase in the near future, given that the population is getting older (see Issue 9).
- Economic trends suggest that digital and STEM skills will be increasingly needed in the future to sustain productivity.

Issue 4: Concentrated deprivation and exclusion

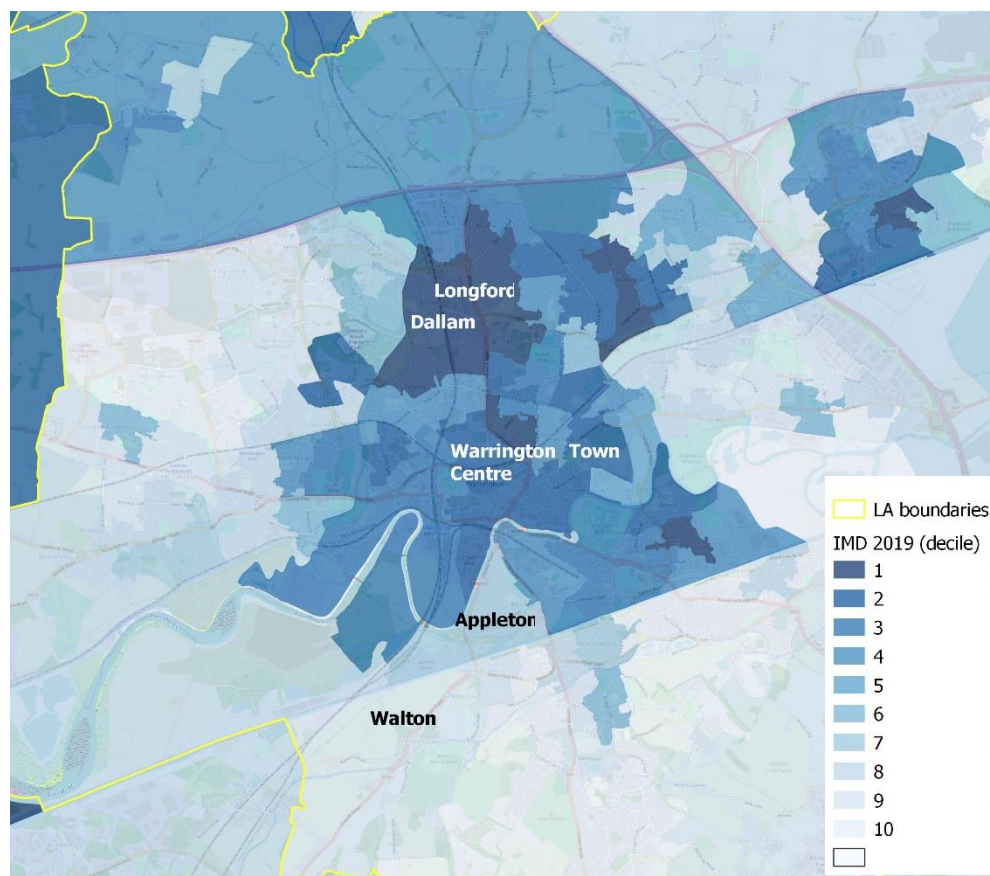
The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) rank of average summary measure shows that overall Warrington ranked 175 out of 317 local authorities in 2019. However within this, there are concentrations of deprivation in the town, in particular in the areas around Dallam and Longford where LSOAs (Lower Layer Super Output Area) rank among the top 10% most deprived in the country (**Figure 1-6**).¹³ This ring is surrounded by areas of low deprivation, including around Appleton, and Walton.

¹¹ Cheshire and Warrington LEP, based on apprenticeship National Achievement Rate Tables 2017/18

¹² Cheshire and Warrington LEP (2019), Labour and learning market assessment (draft version)

¹³ LSOA refers to lower super output area, the smallest statistical unit in England and Wales

Figure 1-6 – Level of deprivation by LSOA in Warrington Town centre



Source: ONS, Multiple Deprivation Index 2019

Deprivation in Warrington is driven by two factors: health and employment. Warrington ranks as the 92nd most health deprived local authority in England (out of 317) - this measures the risk of premature death and the impairment of quality of life through poor physical or mental health¹⁴.

Warrington is also the 148th (out of 317) most employment deprived local authority – with employment deprivation measuring the proportion of the working age population involuntarily excluded from the labour market¹⁵. Deprivation is also spatially concentrated: looking at education attainment, the areas in and around the town centre have relatively low concentrations of residents with high qualifications, while in suburbs such as Appleton, more than 60% of the population is high skilled¹⁶.

1.3.2. Housing and infrastructure

Issue 5: High levels of congestion and connectivity issues

Warrington (New Town) was planned for low density development with housing separated from jobs, leisure and business services.¹⁷ This has created a car dependent environment where public transport is difficult to operate.¹⁸ In 2011, 8 out of 10 Warrington workers travelled to work by car, either as a driver (73.9%) or as a passenger (6.2%), shown in **Figure 1-8** a substantially higher proportion than the England average (60.2% driving a car to work) and other new towns such as Northampton (67.7%) and Milton Keynes (68.9%).

¹⁴ MHCLG (2019), The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (IoD2019)

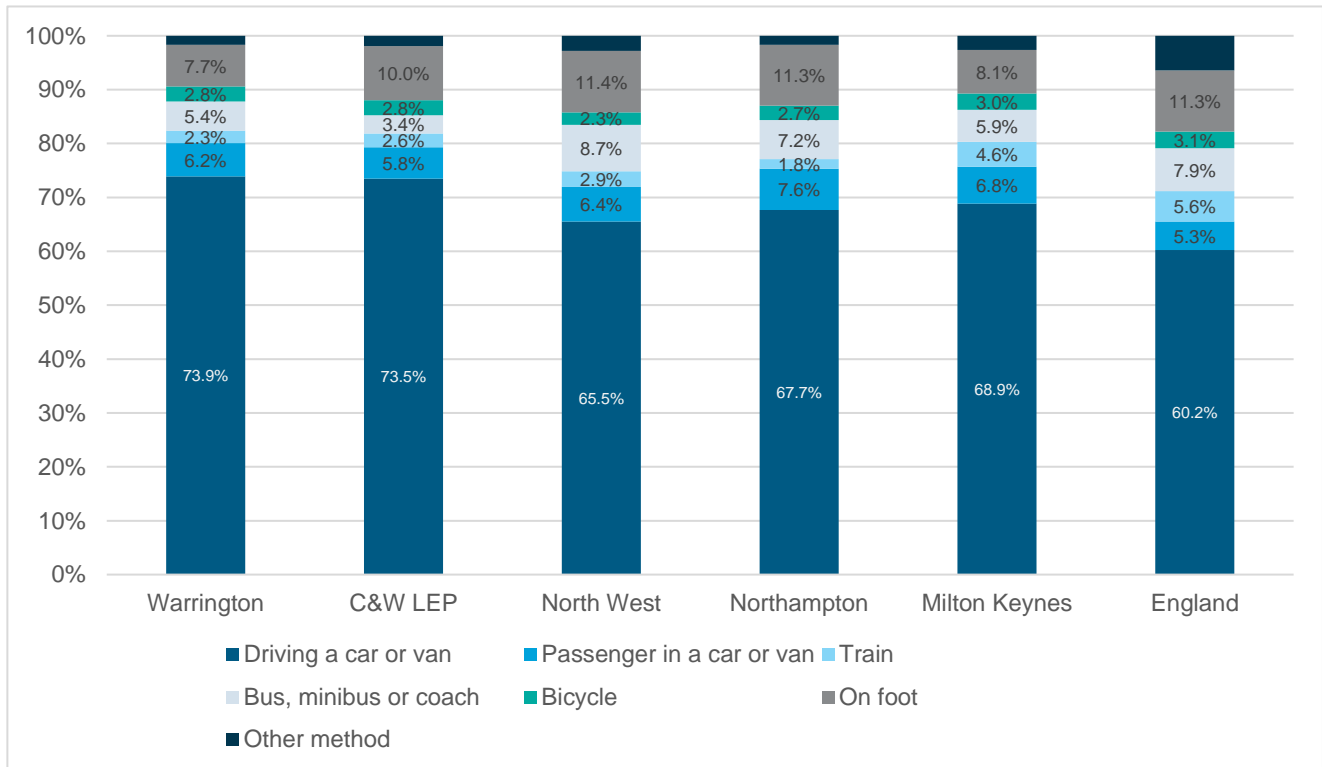
¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ Cheshire and Warrington LEP (2017), *Strategic Economic Plan: Economic and resident baseline*

¹⁷ Select Committee on Transport, Local Government and the Regions Nineteenth Report, 2002

¹⁸ Ibid

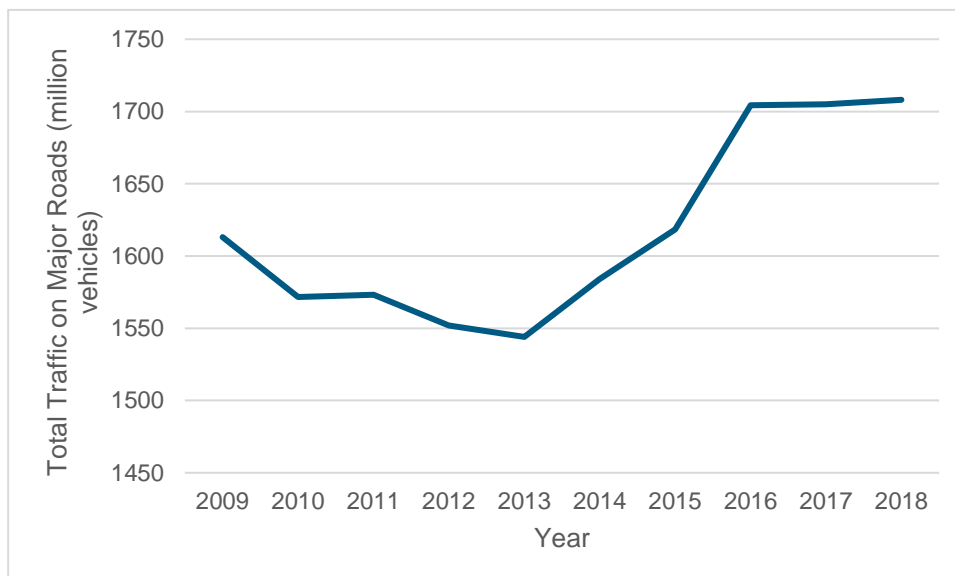
Figure 1-7 – Journey to Work Mode Share – Warrington Compared to Other Places



Source: ONS, 2011 Census

High car dependency leads to congestion which has a negative effect on productivity and health. It also increases bus journey times and perceived danger of walking and cycling which makes public transport and active travel modes less attractive. As shown in **Figure 1-8** car traffic in Warrington has increased between 2009 and 2018 and average journey times are higher when compared with the adjacent Local Authorities.

Figure 1-8 – Total Traffic on major roads in Warrington



Source: Department for Transport Statistics (Warrington Local Transport Plan, 2019)

Issue 6: Lack of investment in the town centre

Warrington has experienced declining retail demand in the town centre and has therefore attracted less investment than in the previous decades. This has resulted in surplus 'high street retail' property in concentrated areas of the town centre. Across the country, 2018 saw more shop closures than openings, leading to an overall vacancy rate of 11.5% in Great Britain, the highest level since 2015.¹⁹

In Warrington town centre, the vacancy rate was significantly higher in July 2020, at 13.9%. Part of the reason Warrington is more susceptible to this phenomenon is that it has a high proportion of retail space in the town centre (35%), whereas more resilient town centres have high proportions of office and residential uses, as shown on **Figure 1-9**. This issue is further exacerbated by pockets of deprivation in the town centre (Issue 4).

Figure 1-9 – Town centre composition compared to England and Wales average



Source: Centre for Cities

Issue 7: Shortage of housing for targeted groups under land scarcity

The Local Housing Need Assessment (2019) identifies a need to deliver a minimum of 18,900 new homes (or 945 per year) between 2017 and 2037²⁰, however availability of land in the town centre is limited by the surrounding Green Belt. This has caused Warrington to experience one of the highest increases in new build house prices in the North, with increases of 59% from 2013 to 2017, compared to just 14% increase in the rest of the Cheshire and Warrington LEP area.

The Local Housing Needs Assessment recognises a need to target specific vulnerable populations, including:

- **Affordable housing** - an overall need of 377 homes/year between 2017 and 2037, or about 40% of all new homes.
- **Housing for older people and people with disabilities** - around 20% of new homes to be provided to accommodate older persons, with extra care facilities.
- **Housing for young people** - There is a need to provide appropriate housing to incentivise young graduates to Warrington (Issue 2).

1.3.3. Health and Wellbeing

Issue 8: Health deprivation is high in the town centre

There are significant disparities in levels of deprivation in Warrington, particularly in terms of health (Issue 4). Life expectancy is 9.6 years lower for men and 7.4 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Warrington than in the least deprived areas.²¹ Areas with the highest levels of health deprivation are Dallam, Longford, Westy and Blackbrooke.

¹⁹ Local Data Company, Retail and Leisure Market analysis, Full Year 2018, May 2019

²⁰ Warrington LHNA, 2019

²¹ Public Health England (2020), Local Authority Health Profile 2019

Generally, Public Health England’s statistics indicates that Warrington tends to score poorly on health issues related to behaviours – such as alcohol consumption and inactivity – with the exception of smoking. **Table 1-1** below illustrates the prevalence of several long-term conditions in Warrington versus the national average.

Table 1-1 Prevalence of selected disease groups versus England average

Prevalence	Cancer per 100,000 people			%	%	%		
	Breast Cancer	Colorectal Cancer	Lung Cancer	Common Mental Health Disorders	Coronary Heart Disease	Hyper-tension	Over 45s w/ Hip Osteo-arthritis	Over 45s w/ Knee Osteo-arthritis
Warrington	172.4	67.2	78.2	17.5	4.3	23.6	10.7	18
England	156.8	62.8	65.9	15.6	4.6	23.6	10.9	18.2

Source: Public Health England, 2019

Issue 9: Ageing population

The greatest challenge in Warrington is the ageing population, where almost 20% of the population is aged over 65.²² By 2030, it is predicted the over 65 population in Warrington will have increased by nearly 60% from 2010 levels, and that the above 80 years old population will have more than doubled.²³ These demographic changes will increase the burden of future health and care service provision.

Table 1-2 Estimated population change for a range of physical and mental health issues

	Type of illness/ disability	2017	2037	Change	% increase
2016-based SNPP	Dementia	2,484	4,447	1,963	79.0%
	Mobility problems	6,727	11,043	4,317	64.2%
Linked to economic growth	Dementia	2,498	4,529	2,031	81.3%
	Mobility problems	6,748	11,259	4,512	66.9%

Source: Warrington Local Housing Need Assessment, 2019

There is therefore a need to prepare for this by providing:

- **Health services responding to specific areas on increased demand:** including older people, mental health and obesity related issues.
- **Adapted housing and care facilities:** in 2010, all facilities in Warrington were up to capacity, with an average 920 patients visiting daily.
- **An appropriately trained health and social care workforce:** linking to Issue 2 - skills shortage in health and social care sector.

Issue 10: Air quality could be improved

Congestion in the town centre, linked to high car dependency (Issue 5), leads to poor air quality. Generally, Warrington experiences ‘Low’ pollution, as based on DEFRA’s UK Air site²⁴, however approximately 1.8% of the population still live in AQMAs (Air Quality Management Areas)²⁵ around the town centre and main arterial roads. Emissions per capita are high: among the 63 largest urban areas in the UK, Warrington ranked first in terms of NO₂ per 10,000 population, and fourth with regards to PM_{2.5} emissions per 10,000 population²⁶. The health impacts of poor air quality are likely to disproportionately impact those disadvantaged groups already subject to health inequalities (Issue 8).

Issue 11: Barriers to active travel

Active travel is a fundamental component of reducing car dependency and improving health. Barriers to cycling and walking within Warrington is highlighted as a key issue facing the town in several reports and local policies

²² Warrington Borough Council (2019), Well Warrington: Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Warrington (2019-2023)

²³ Warrington CCG, The Local Digital Roadmap for Warrington

²⁴ Accessible on: https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/forecasting/locations?q=warrington&day=5#map_summary

²⁵ Warrington borough website, Air quality and pollution page. Accessed on: <https://www.warrington.gov.uk/airquality>

²⁶ Ibid

– including Warrington’s proposed Local Plan, Warrington Central 6 Strategy, Warrington Town Centre Masterplan and Warrington Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). Across a series of workshops and summits held in 2017 to develop the LCWIP, it was highlighted that the main barriers to active travel were poor safety, lack of route knowledge and the dominance of cars.²⁷

1.3.4. Arts, Culture and Digital

Issue 12: Lack of visibility of cultural assets

A recent public consultation on the cultural offer in Warrington identified that:

- There was a feeling that Warrington lacks identity or that people are unsure what its identity is.
- Many people felt that heritage and history were a very important part of developing a sense of place and character.

There is a lack of ‘excitement’ and knowledge around the existing infrastructure, historical assets and events. Addressing this issue will:

- Help support the development and regeneration of the town centre, along with other strategies (such as First/Last Mile) and,
- Improve residents’ wellbeing.

Issue 13: Lack of coordination and partnership across the digital sector

The digital sector is growing quickly in Warrington, as per Nesta’s 2016 report, and industry leaders are based in Warrington. However, the sector is still small and lacks crucial partnerships. The two large digital companies, FinTech and robotics, are keen to engage but currently seldom involved. Initiatives such as OPUS are a good starting point, but it was recognised that there was a need for a bigger space focusing on the digital sector to offer more training courses and events and improve the scope of the existing outreach programmes. This could also encourage knowledge sharing and support local digital entrepreneurs.

²⁷ Ibid

1.4. Summary

Themes	Strengths	Issues	Needs
Education, skills and employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good level of educational attainment, relative to the region • Skill-based industrial sectors • High wages compared to regional and national average • Part of a highly productive region (C&W LEP) 	1. Local productivity is low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve local skills, attract new businesses
		2. Skills shortage in specific key growth sectors and difficult to attract graduates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better linkages between employers and education providers • Improve the quality of education • Provide infrastructure and incentives to attract graduates
		3. Increasing demand for specific sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on improving education/training in specific sectors, including social care, digital and STEM
		4. Concentrated deprivation and exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve employability of long-term unemployed through training/apprenticeships/other programmes that could help • Incentivise better health practices • Focus on town centre regeneration where most deprived areas are located
Housing and Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great location in between Liverpool and Manchester • HS2 and NPR investments planned • High digital connectivity • Considerable natural assets • A growing economy, with demand for housing and infrastructure 	5. High level of congestion and connectivity issue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentivise the use of public transport and active mode • Improve connectivity to main employment sites
		6. Lack of attractiveness of the town centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve connectivity to the town centre, walkability, etc. • Improve the public realm • Support residential developments • Encourage digital and cultural businesses to locate in the town centre
		7. Shortage of housing for targeted groups under land scarcity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take advantage of town centre regeneration to build more homes • Build small, affordable flats to targets graduates
Health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good reported health levels overall, but pockets of deprivation • Good health infrastructure coverage • Considerable natural assets 	8. Health deprivation is high in certain locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target specific demographic and location and invest in prevention
		9. Population getting older	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there is adequate provision of services for this growing population which will include social care facilities, housing and trained social care workers
		10. Air quality could be improved in the town centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce car traffic by improving public transport mobility and encouraging alternative modes
		11. There are barriers to walking and cycling throughout the town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require infrastructure investment at key locations • Preserve and enhance green spaces
Arts, culture and digital	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A fast-growing creative scene, identified as a high growth area for digital and creative sectors • Significant arts and cultural assets and events given Warrington's size • A Cultural Quarter in the town centre, which will directly benefit from regeneration programmes 	12. Lack of visibility and attractiveness of cultural assets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract more people to cultural events / access to assets • Improve communication around cultural and historical assets
		13. Lack of coordination/partnerships across the digital sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create spaces / anchor location for the wider community • Encourage events for the digital community

1.5. Covid-19 assessment

Like the rest of the UK, Warrington's economy has been significantly affected by the COVID-19 lockdown. Key findings and implications are summarised here, with the full analysis available in **Annex C**.

- Overall, Warrington's economy was significantly impacted, but probably less than other parts of the country. According to Centre for Cities, Warrington should be more resilient to the economic impact of the pandemic because it has a higher proportion of jobs that could shift to home working – 36% of the workforce is in professional, technical and scientific industries, which have been less affected.
- Yet Warrington also has a high proportion of workers in the retail, accommodation and food sectors (29%), in line with the rest of the UK. At the end of May 2020, 24,500 Warrington residents were on furlough (Figure 1-10). Though Warrington has seen a significant increase in Universal Credit claimants, it has recovered from the initial spike at the start of the lockdown period at a faster rate than the rest of the UK: at the end of May, the number of claimants in England was 163% higher than the previous years, whereas it was only 89% higher in Warrington (**Figure 1-11**).²⁸
- In reacting to the economic downturn, the number of firms posting new vacancies decreased significantly. Unique job postings online for vacancies in Cheshire and Warrington declined by 45% between March and May 2020. The decline of job posting in Cheshire and Warrington has been higher in every main occupational area compared to England.
- The town centre is likely to have been the most affected area, as this is where retail is concentrated. Footfall has progressively recovered to acceptable rates: on July 7th, the number of people in the town centre was at 84% pre-lockdown rates, similar to Wigan (85%) and higher than larger cities such as Manchester (37%) and Liverpool (42%).²⁹
- While this does not mean that the town centre is resilient in the long term (as explained in Issue 6, it has a higher than average vacancy rate), it still shows that it plays an important role in the town's economy and that this role has potential to be strengthened.
- As take up of active modes in Warrington is low (only 10.5% of Warrington's residents used active travel to get to work, which is lower than the national average and other New Town developments³⁰), there is a risk that returning to normal levels of car use without similar public transport provision will disproportionately impact more vulnerable demographics that tend to rely on bus travel such as young people, older people and those without access to a car.
- Whilst the impact of the crisis on individual sectors are difficult to foresee with clarity, a number of trends seem to emerge:
 - Healthcare and social care services will need to adapt, whenever possible, to digital changes to offer remote services. Some places have also experienced shortages of workers. The crisis has also highlighted the importance of mental health support.³¹
 - Several experts estimate that construction will be quick to bounce back³², and this is further supported by the strong support it has received by Government.
 - Retail and food retail workers have become a new category of frontline workers, and investment in protective equipment, shop design and street layout are required.³³
 - The crisis has shown the importance of the cultural and digital sectors, and their value in individual's wellbeing.

²⁸ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/universal-credit-29-april-2013-to-14-may-2020>

²⁹ Centre for Cities, High street recovery tracker. Accessible at: <https://www.centreforcities.org/data/high-streets-recovery-tracker/>. Accessed on: 20/07/2020

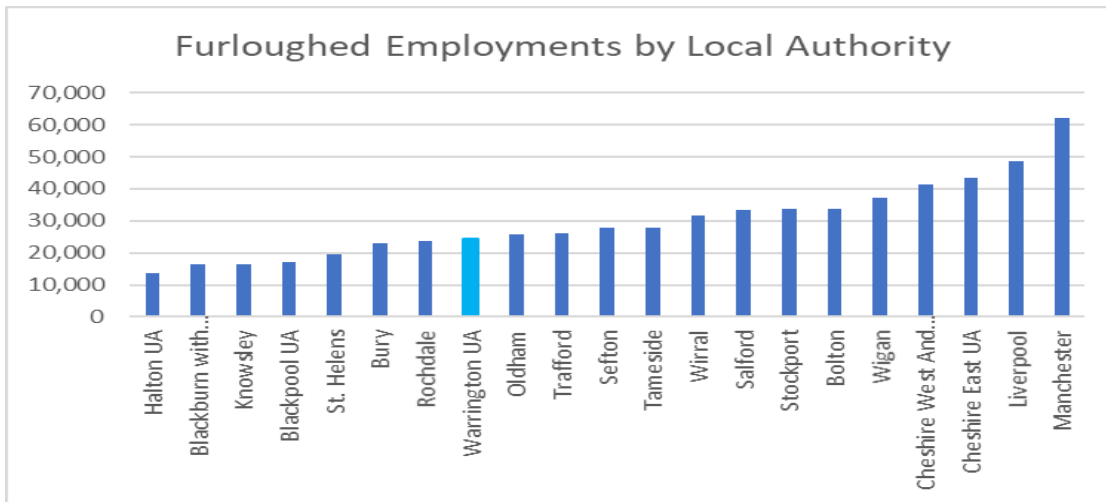
³⁰ https://www.warrington.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2019-08/ltp4_evidence_base_review.pdf

³¹ International Labour Organisation (2020), *ILO Sectoral Brief, COVID-19 and the health sector*

³² Liz Murphy, A timeline: the future of the UK's housing market & construction industry post lockdown, House Beautiful, retrieved from: <https://www.housebeautiful.com/uk/lifestyle/property/a32446524/coronavirus-lockdown-uk-housing-market-construction/>

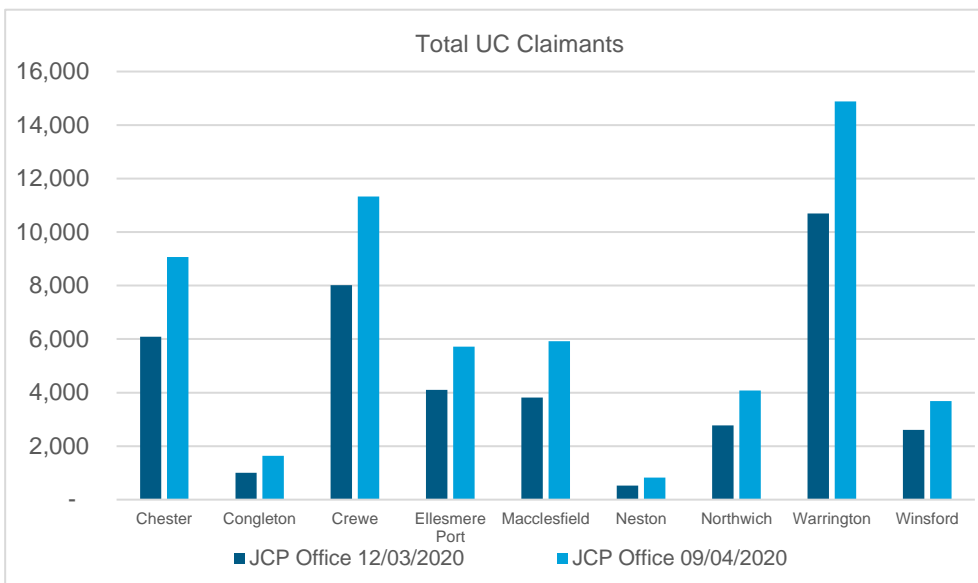
³³ International Labour Organisation (2020), *ILO Sectoral Brief, COVID-19 and the food retail sector*

Figure 1-10 – Furloughed employment by local authority, 2020



Source: HMRC, Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

Figure 1-11 – Change in Universal Credit claimant, Warrington and neighbour local authorities



Source: DWP

Strategy



Top left: Golden Square
Top Right: A view of Town Centre
Bottom Right: River and Green Space in Warrington

2. Strategy

The following sections are discussed in this chapter:

[Section 2.1 – Town Vision](#)

[Section 2.2 – Strategic Plan](#)

[Section 2.3 – Preferred projects](#)

[Section 2.4 – Clean growth commitment](#)

[Section 2.5 – An integrated plan serving a wider theory of change.](#)

2.1. Town Vision

Warrington is one of the most successful towns in the country and a significant player in the regional and sub-regional economy. The town is associated with both Manchester and Liverpool City Regions and has employment and housing links with mid Mersey authorities and north Cheshire. Warrington relies on a diverse and skilled-based economy, with specialisation in distribution, new technologies and financial services. Several key employment sites have been developed throughout the years, including the 2,500,000 square ft Omega business park. However, Warrington faces significant challenges with regards to deprivation, inclusive growth, the built environment and transportation.

Warrington’s vision reflects these existing strengths and opportunities for improvement. The Borough’s most recent **Corporate Strategy** (2020) has been developed around four pledges and associated priorities, as summarised in **Figure 2-1**.

Figure 2-1 – Warrington draft Corporate Strategy pledges and priorities

<p>Our residents live healthy, happy & independent lives</p> <p>People are healthy, safe and well</p> <p>People have opportunities to thrive</p> <p>High quality education and youth facilities</p> <p>Early intervention to delay long-term health conditions arising</p> <p>Residents feel part of their community</p>	<p>Everyone benefits from our thriving economy</p> <p>A place where businesses invest and thrive</p> <p>A place that provides opportunity for all</p> <p>Invest in and provide access to the right skills and education</p> <p>Sustainable employment opportunities</p> <p>The right sustainable economy for the future</p>	<p>Communities are safe, strong & our most vulnerable are protected</p> <p>A safe place</p> <p>Empowered, resilient and independent communities - people take responsibility for their area</p> <p>Safeguard our children and adults and protect our most vulnerable</p> <p>A place of culture, sport, wellbeing and lifelong learning</p> <p>Delivery of our equality objectives</p> <p>Actively support our residents, businesses and communities impacted by COVID-19</p>	<p>Our town is clean, green & vibrant</p> <p>Reduce the impacts of climate change</p> <p>Improve air quality</p> <p>Effective waste management</p> <p>Make best use of green spaces and natural resources</p> <p>Clean streets and public places</p> <p>Sustainable transport and travel</p>
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Source: Warrington draft Corporate Strategy, 2020

This Corporate Strategy focuses on offering opportunities for the most vulnerable, growing a strong economy for all, building strong, active and resilient communities and creating a place to be proud of. Warrington and the wider sub-region have, through the LIS (Local Industrial Strategy), a shared ambition of improving the lives and opportunities for the people who live and work here. Warrington is committed to being at the forefront of sustainable, inclusive growth and public sector reform, placing local people at the heart of service design, delivery and opportunities. Ensuring that every resident and business, whether in the town centre or wider urban areas, has the opportunity to contribute to and benefit from the sub-region's prosperity.

The Warrington's vision is that by 2030:

- Warrington is a sub-regional focus of employment for the North West. It is a diverse economy that meets the needs of businesses, including services (finance and business services), the knowledge economy and manufacturing sectors. It provides training and employment opportunities for everyone, at all levels of education and career.
- Warrington provides excellent quality of life, scoring high on health, wellbeing and education. Appropriate infrastructures are in place so that private cars are no longer the preferred means of transport.
- Residents are proud to live in Warrington. Warrington has a diverse cultural and artistic offer, and it provides inclusive access to green spaces, sports and leisure facilities. The town centre is a compact, attractive and lively part of the Borough that provides a pleasant experience for living, working, shopping and leisure.
- Sustainability and climate change are the key priorities for every new investment, including housing and energy.

2.2. Strategic plan

This Town Investment Plan (TIP) for Warrington has been developed in response to the challenge set out by MHCLG in the **Stronger Towns Fund Prospectus**. The Fund seeks to drive the economic regeneration and productivity growth through:

- **Urban regeneration and land use interventions** - ensuring thriving places to live and work, with the strengthening of economic assets, including cultural assets, through site acquisition, remediation, preparation and regeneration.
- **Skills and employment** - driving private sector investment and providing space to support skills and small business development.
- **Connectivity** - developing local transport schemes that complement regional and national networks and developing digital connectivity.

2.2.1. Existing strategies

The Warrington TIP has focused on prioritising proposed interventions which complement and are integrated with other existing and planned regeneration and growth investment from both the public and private sectors. This means that interventions are shaped to support the outcomes of existing plans to which the Council and our partners are fully committed. This maximises opportunities to achieve good value for money and enables the alignment of the Fund's objectives with Warrington's wider strategic objectives.

Warrington's core objectives and potential projects identified in this TIP are closely aligned with the Fund's three strategic intervention themes. The translation of the Themes into Warrington's objectives is summarised below.

Urban regeneration and land use

The existing primary strategy underpinning the town's regeneration and growth agenda is the 2019 iteration of the economic growth framework '**Warrington Means Business**'.

This strategy sets an ambition:

'To unleash the potential of Warrington's people, its businesses, its connectivity, and its place to accelerate economic growth and reinforce Warrington as a strong national driver of prosperity.'

Its priorities are for:

- Strategic connectivity and a smart town; local connectivity; and connected business locations
- Supporting business growth and investment, and enhancing Warrington's talent
- Cleaner, greener growth and enhanced liveability
- An inclusive economy and
- A town centre focus.

This strategy is complemented and supported by a range of other plans and strategies that are key to the future success of Warrington, including the **Local Transport Plan 4** (2019), the **Air Quality Strategy** (2019), **Central 6 Masterplan** (2019), the **Health and Wellbeing Strategy** (2019), and the **Town Centre Masterplan** (2020).

Warrington's housing delivery is informed by the **Strategic Housing Market Assessment** (2017) and presented in the **Local Plan**. Warrington has an aspiration for Town City Living, with an identified capacity to deliver up to 8,000 town centre units following public sector intervention, including a range of infrastructure and regeneration initiatives. The **Central 6 Masterplan** is dedicated to neighbourhood management and regeneration of the six inner wards areas of Warrington.³⁴

The Culture Board, Consortium and Practitioner networks are representative bodies overseeing and delivering a vision for cultural growth in Warrington. This has culminated in a **Cultural Vision** that was developed following Warrington's application to be the UK 2021 City of Culture. Whilst Warrington was not selected, the submission has helped recognise the importance of culture and heritage in the town and emulated the ambition to further support the sector, in particular around entrepreneurship and digital skills.

Warrington's **Infrastructure Delivery Plan** (IDP) and the associated Local Plan also provide short and long-term visions of the Borough's development, with agreed strategic milestones and targets. This investment plan complements these existing strategies.

Skills and employment

At the sub-regional level, the Cheshire and Warrington LEP has set out a shared ambition and strategy under the **Local Industrial Strategy** and the **Strategic Economic Plan** (2017). The plan sets out key priorities around digital skills, advanced manufacturing and connectivity. Another LEP initiative, the Pledge, aims to strengthen partnerships between education institutions and local businesses to further align curriculums and improve students' career perspectives.

Warrington is keen to align its labour market projects around the LEP strategy. The Council's **Corporate Strategy** focuses on providing opportunities for the most vulnerable, growing a strong economy for all, building strong, active and resilient communities and creating a place to be proud of. Job Centre Plus Warrington is a key organisation in the town and forms part of the Warrington Employment Skills Action Group, along with key employers and education providers.

The skills and employment agenda is very much linked to the theme of health and wellbeing. The Warrington Health & Wellbeing Board is a formal Committee of Warrington Borough Council established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. The **2019 Health and Wellbeing Strategy** identifies the need for the built environment, transport and housing to facilitate and enable independence to address the practical and financial factors hindering social inclusion. The **Children in Care and Care Leavers Strategy** evidences a need for life skills for children in care to best equip them for social and economic inclusion. Integrated adult social care strategies have also been formulated through consultation coordinated by the Warrington Together Partnership.

The creative and digital scene has already secured funding commitments amounting to over £500,000 and these are already in place from WBC, the LEP, Culture Warrington and Carpe Diem to support elements of a Creative and Digital Hub in Warrington. This will transform the creative, digital, arts, music and performance offer, seeking to retain creative talent and help deliver high quality jobs and SME business development.

Connectivity

The **Local Transport Plan 4** (2019) is a key strategy document in Warrington. The Local Transport Plan has set out a vision of how local transport will support economic growth ambitions. Identified problems include high car dependency and congestion, which can be addressed by making walking, cycling, and public transport more accessible and attractive options. The plan thereby relates to health and wellbeing, in encouraging

³⁴ Kevin Murray Associates, Warrington Central 6 Regeneration Masterplan 2020-2040, Final Report

residents, employees and visitors to lead healthier lifestyles, and urban regeneration, in supporting the creation of a higher quality of place for those who live in, work in and visit Warrington.

The Borough has also developed a **Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plan** (2019-2029) that sets out specific measures to reduce car dependency and therefore make Warrington, in particular the town centre, a more accessible Borough through more active traveling. Warrington’s **First and Last Mile Strategy** (2019) supports this, as it ambitions to limit car use by incentivising workers and visitors to finish (or start) their journey using active or public transport methods. Infrastructure developments are envisioned, including multi-modal hubs with facilities, pedestrian and cycle ways and out-of-town car parks.

2.2.2. Implications for the Towns Investment Plan

The Council is aware of the critical importance of projects being aligned with evidenced local issues and needs, but also being relevant to local, regional and national strategies. As an example, a couple of initial projects (about providing STEM kits to students and STEM-related in-work training) have not been selected because they were too similar to already existing LEP interventions.

Five key elements coming out of the above analysis have been used to guide project determination and design:

- i. **Objectives:** projects should aim to support Warrington achieving the objectives set out in its long-term vision. These are summarised by the four pledges from the Corporate Strategy (**Figure 2-1**);
- ii. **Priority areas for development:** whilst issues and needs have been assessed and discussed on a thematic basis, similar topics appeared across:
 - The need to densify and improve public realm in the town centre, crucially importance with regards to health and wellbeing, employment, infrastructure development and deprivation.
 - Environmental issues also come out across all themes, with assessed high levels of congestion and pollution due to high car dependency.
 - The need to further “digitalise”, mentioned through the noted shortage of skills in various industries, the increased use of digital services during the COVID-19 lockdown, and the importance to support the fast-growing digital scene.
- iii. **Spatial strategy:** the town centre is where most issues are concentrated, where the population tends to be more deprived and retail offer has been suffering from lower footfall and high levels of property voids. The COVID-19 crisis has confirmed this, and the town centre is likely to be the part of town that suffered the most in economic terms. The Warrington Means Business strategy is also significantly focused around improving the town centre, with many associated policy papers (Central 6 Masterplan, Town Centre Masterplan, First/Last Mile Strategy).
- iv. **Time priority:** from stakeholders’ discussions and the needs assessment, issues related to training and wellbeing were suggested as some of the most pressing. One specific project presented below, the bus depot relocation, is set to be the fastest delivered whilst providing great improvements in transport and housing.
- v. **Integrated interventions:** The fact that issues are (mostly) spatially concentrated and can be grouped into large cross-sectoral topics – environment, digital, improved public realm – provides a real opportunity to develop an integrated intervention plan, with each project helping to support more than one of Warrington’s objectives. The combination of these interventions could generate greater benefits than the sum of each individual project.

In addition to this list of criteria, projects have been developed to ensure they comply with the Towns Fund thematic objectives. Four objectives have been created to align with both Warrington’s strategy and the Towns Fund aims, and these objectives also guided the formation of the four thematic groups (**Section 413.1**). Warrington’s objectives and their correspondence to the Town Funds are summarised in **Figure 2-2** below.

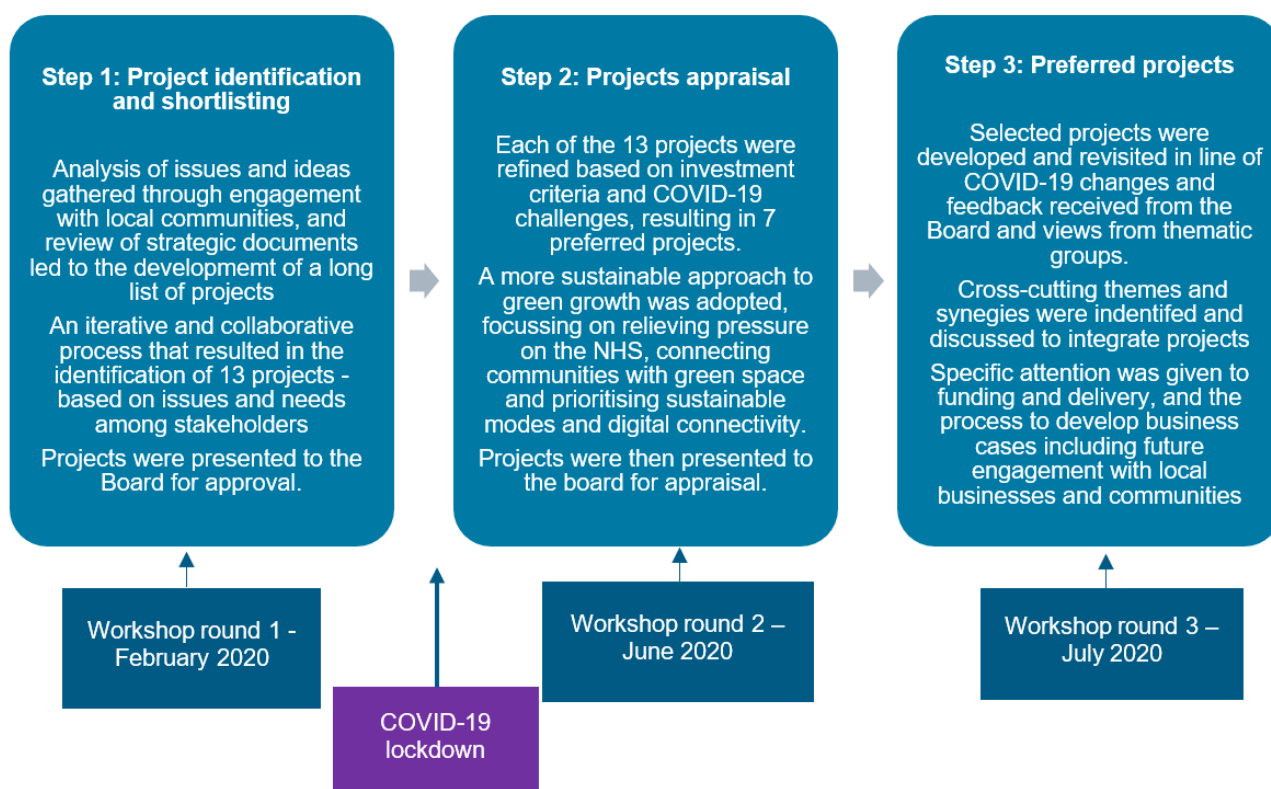
Figure 2-2 – Correspondence between local and Towns Fund objectives

Warrington’s Objectives	An attractive town centre for visitors and businesses	Improved skills, education and jobs opportunities	A strong digital and cultural ecosystem	Better health and wellbeing for higher productivity
Government Towns Fund National Objectives	Urban regeneration Connectivity	Skills and enterprise infrastructure	Urban regeneration Connectivity	Urban regeneration

2.3. Preferred projects

The overall process of identifying and prioritising projects was applied in line with the Green Book, summarised below in **Figure 2-3**, with more details in **Annex A**.

Figure 2-3 – Projects Selection Process



Following the project selection process, illustrated in **Figure 2-3** above, seven projects (A to G) were retained. The projects are depicted below by a series of logic maps. Each logic map is used to facilitate the understanding of the project and illustrate the relationship between input, output, outcome and impact of each project on the local communities and businesses. Each logic map contains:

- A brief description of the project.
- How the issues identified in **Section 1.3** are addressed by the project;
- The input and output of each project;
- The type of indicators used to measure the predicted outcomes;
- All predicted impacts; and finally
- The Town Fund objectives that each project meets.

The anticipated location for each project is illustrated in **Figure 2-4** below (Zoomed map of projects) and **Figure 2-5 to Figure 2-11** are comprised of the seven project (A to G) logic maps.

Figure 2-4 – Proposed project locations

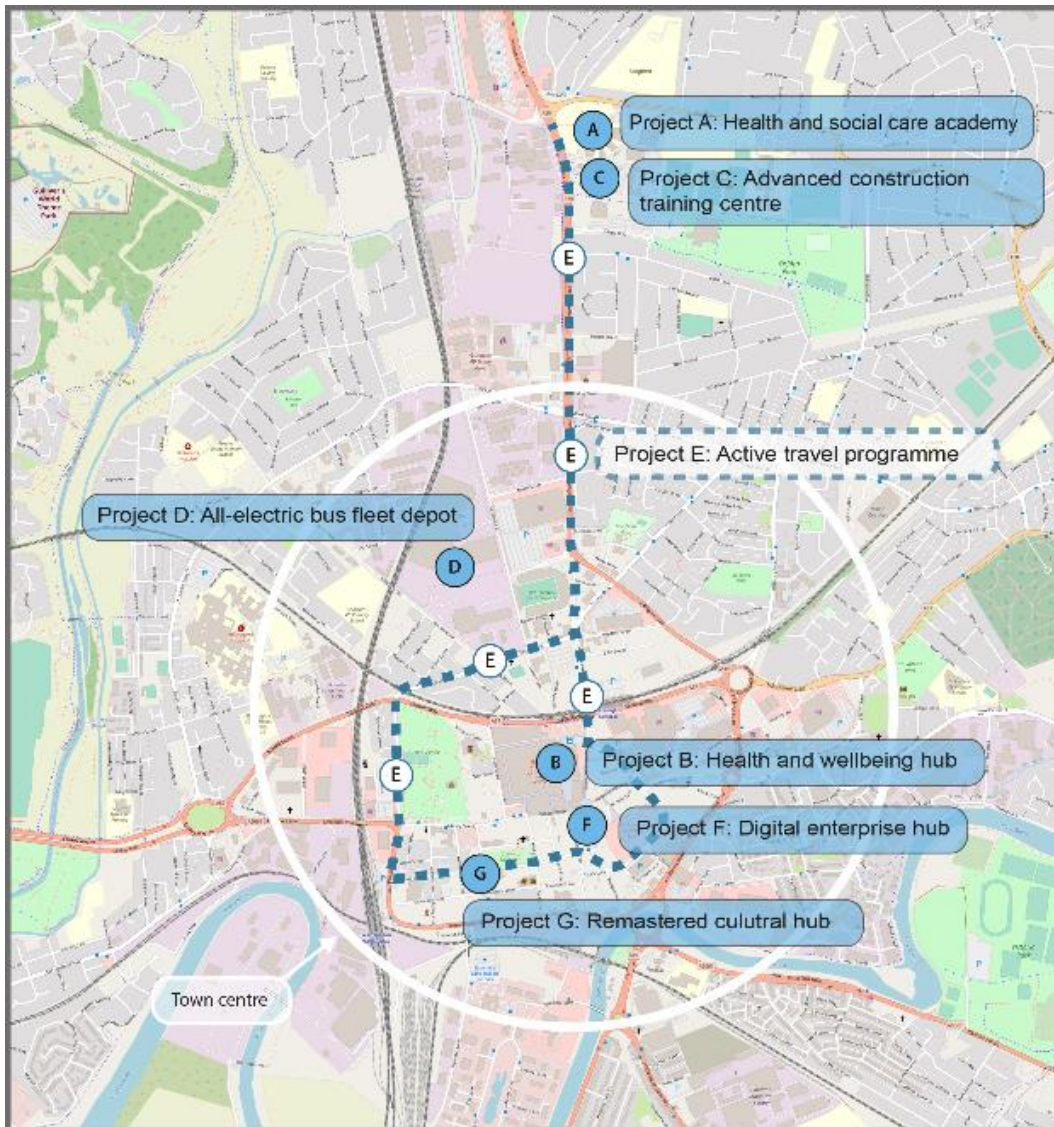
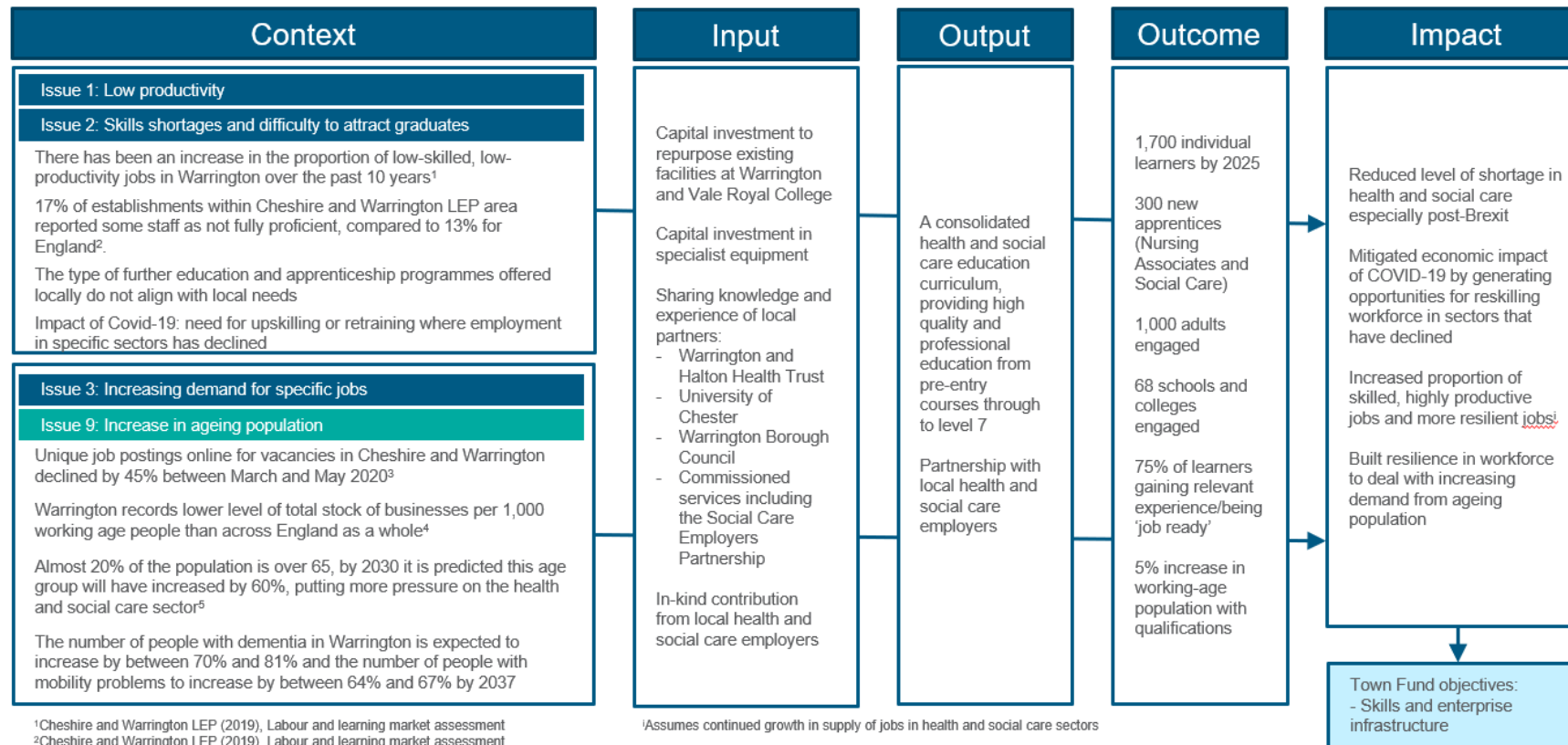


Figure 2-5 – Project A – Health & Social Care Academy – Logic Map

To re-purpose an existing building on the Warrington and Vale Royal College’s campus to establish a Health and Social Care Academy (HSCA) hub. The HSCA will create a consolidated health and social care education curriculum, dedicated to skills training from pre or first entry into the sector through to higher level up-skilling. The HSCA will work collaboratively with three other anchor organisations: Warrington and Halton Health Trust and the University of Chester, and Warrington Borough Council.

The project will address key challenges (lack of social and healthcare professionals, growing demand for social care, need to upskill to retain current NHS staff within Warrington) and help to deliver the local and national strategies, including government’s NHS Long Term Plan (2019) to recruit 50,000 more nurses and 26,000 more primary care professionals.

The project is modelled and inspired from the Health Training Hub at Hugh Baird College, Liverpool.

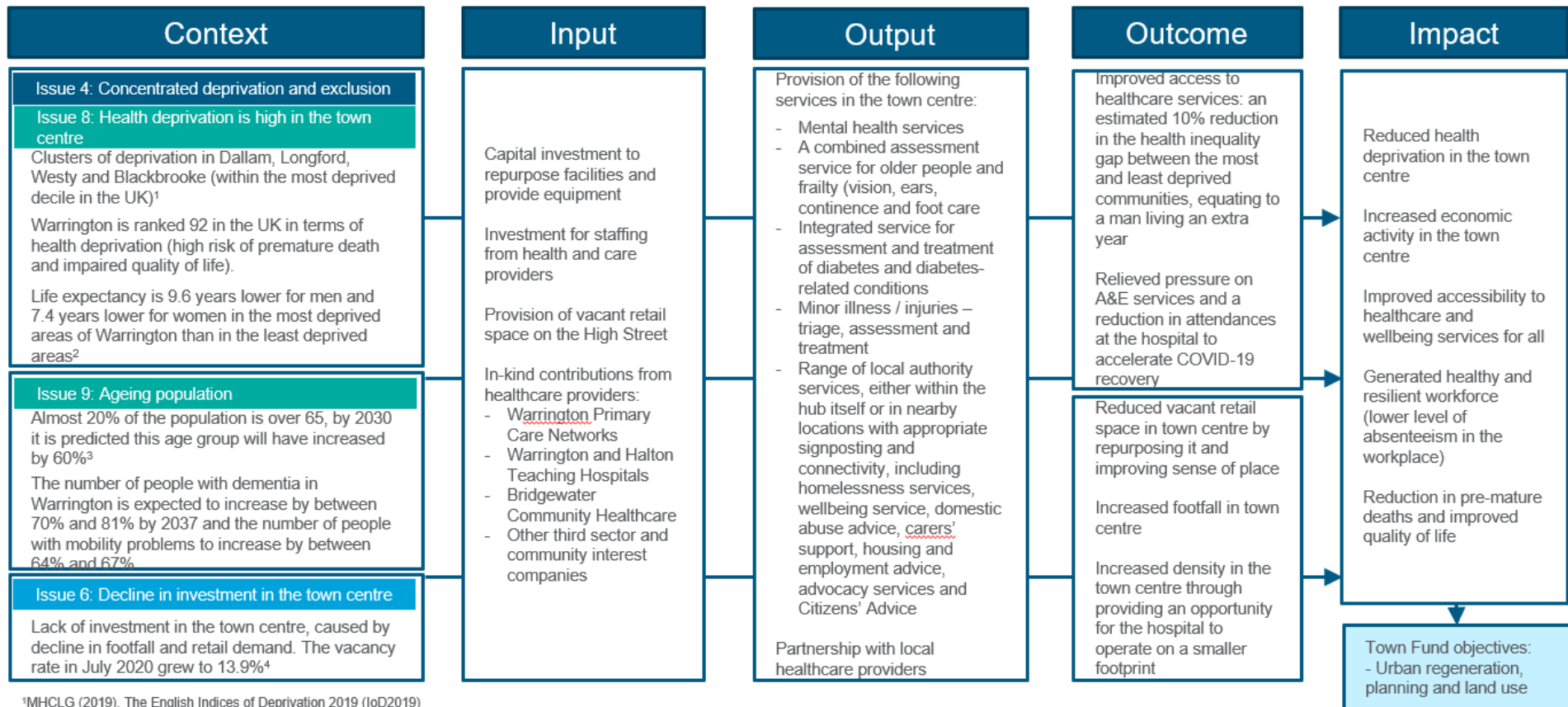


¹Cheshire and Warrington LEP (2019), Labour and learning market assessment
²Cheshire and Warrington LEP (2019), Labour and learning market assessment
³Covid-19 Crisis: Current Impacts on the Cheshire and Warrington Labour Market
⁴Warrington LTP4 evidence base review
⁵Warrington CCG, The Local Digital Roadmap for Warrington

⁶Assumes continued growth in supply of jobs in health and social care sectors

Figure 2-6 – Project B – Health & Wellbeing Hub – Logic Map

This project will see the development of a Health and Wellbeing Hub in empty retail space in the town centre, with convenient access health and wellbeing services. The project will address the double challenges of health deprivation among the Town Centre population – which crucially lacks walk-in healthcare facilities (apart from the hospital), already facing pressure – and town centre disinvestments, where retail stock is now in surplus. Providing health services that are convenient and easy to access is likely to increase engagement with those in need of care, and so this project will place health provision in the heart of the town centre as part of the wider town centre masterplan.



¹MHCLG (2019), The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (IoD2019)

²Public Health England (2020), Local Authority Health Profile 2019

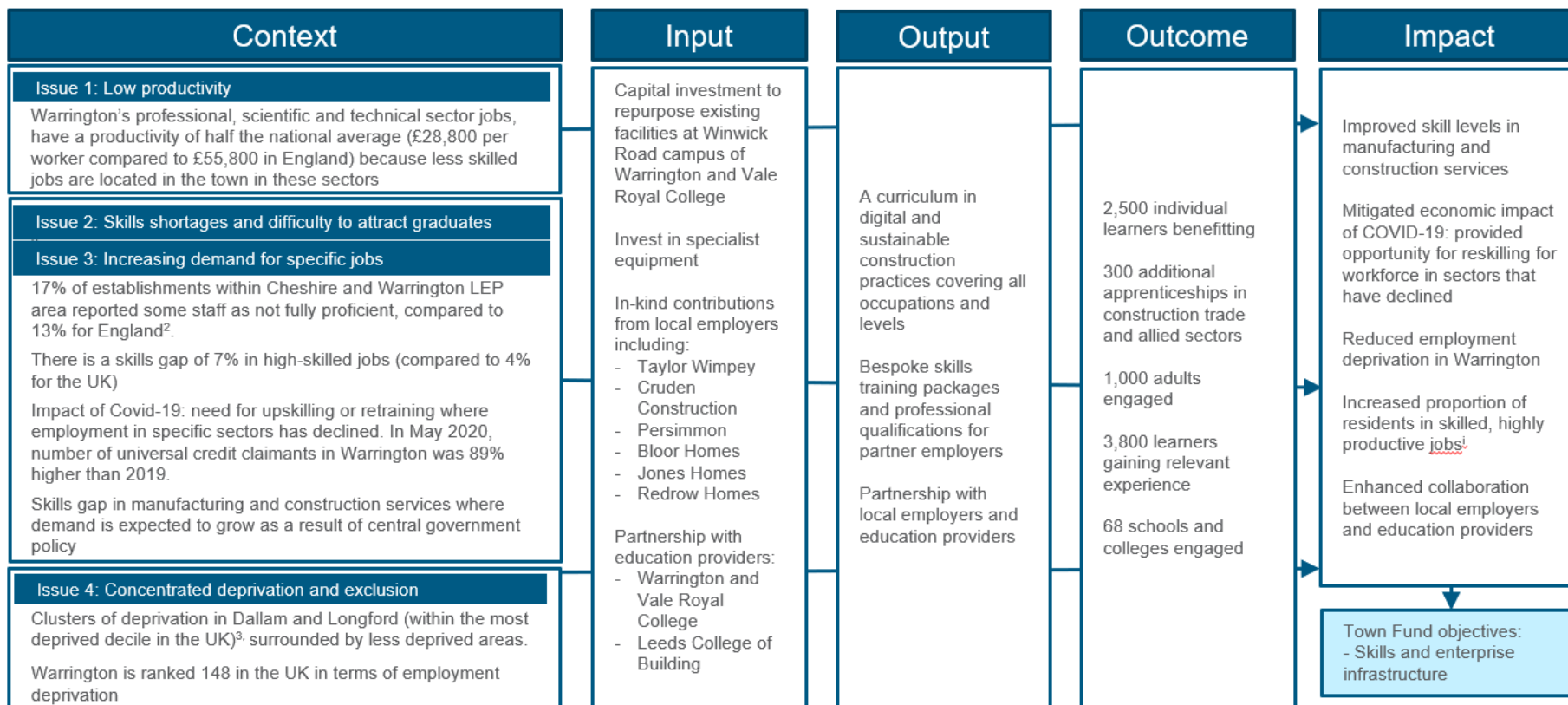
³Warrington CCG, The Local Digital Roadmap for Warrington

⁴Local Data Company, Retail and Leisure Market analysis, Full Year 2018, May 2019

Figure 2-7 – Project C – Advanced Construction Training Centre

This project will fit out and re-purpose existing surplus academic space at the Warrington & Vale Royal College campus to develop a new Advanced Construction Training (ACT) Centre. The ACT will provide training across disciplines – housebuilding, surveyor, builders, electricians, plumbers, civil engineers, etc. – from lowest to highest levels of qualification, focused on digital and sustainability technologies in the construction industry. The ACT centre will assist the industry to build high quality, smart, green and efficient homes and building infrastructures, faster, cheaper and more sustainably than ever before.

The project will respond to various needs identified by stakeholders and local construction businesses, including the lack of digital skills among the local construction workforce, the requirement to build smart and green infrastructures, and the housing challenge in Warrington. This also closely aligns with the aspirations of the government’s ‘Transforming Construction Challenge’, the Chartered Institute of Building and the Centre for Digitally Built Britain.



¹Cheshire and Warrington LEP (2019), Labour and learning market assessment

²Cheshire and Warrington LEP (2019), Labour and learning market assessment

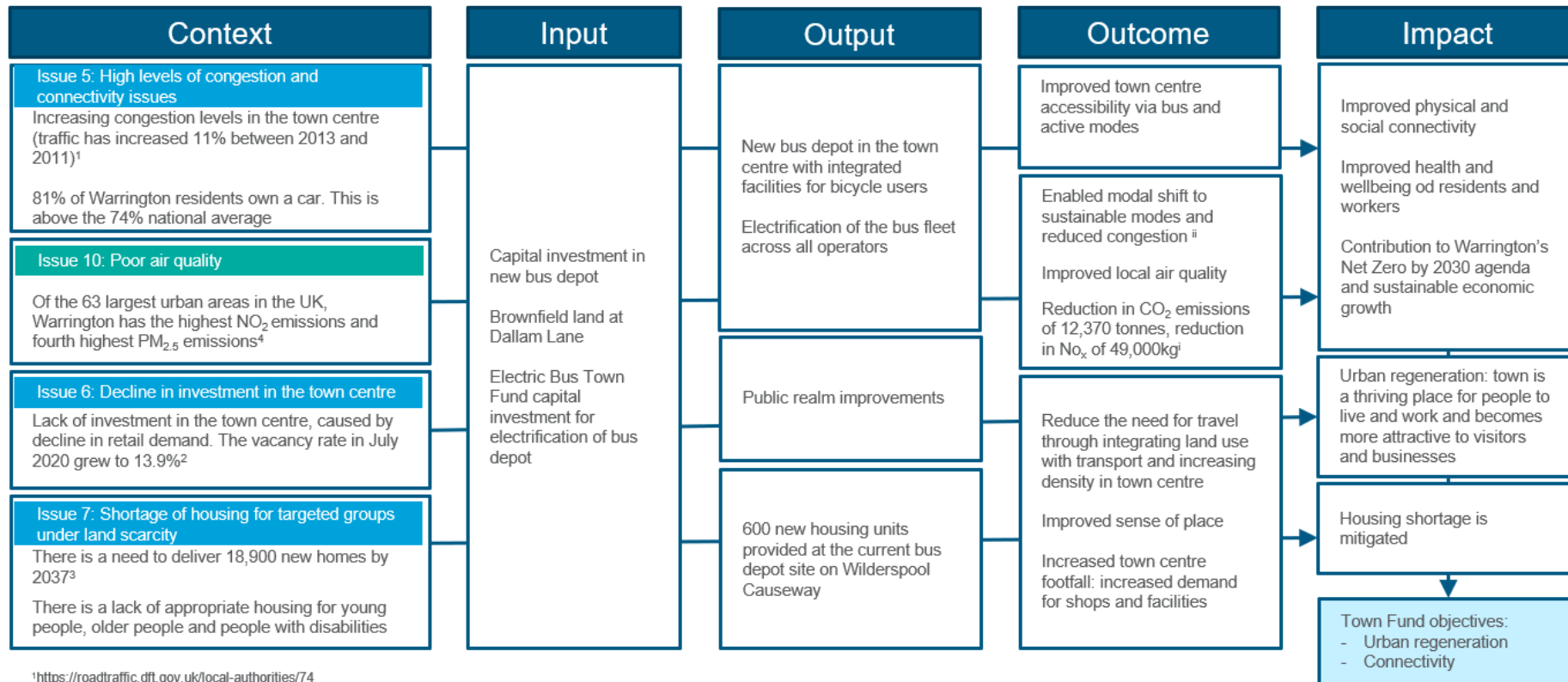
³MHCLG (2019), The English Indices of Deprivation 2019 (IoD2019)

¹Assumes continued growth in supply of jobs in manufacturing and construction sectors

Figure 2-8 – Project D – All Electric Bus Fleet Depot

The capital funding will be used to support the construction of a new bus depot that is capable of supporting an all-electric fleet of buses utilising already strategically acquired and Council owned brownfield land in the town centre.

The new depot, on land owned by WBC, has received planning permission. It involves the relocation of Warrington's Own Buses Depot from its current site to a purpose-built new depot. This is complementary to the recently submitted All Electric Bus Town Expression of Interest which seeks funding towards the extra over costs of making this depot suitable for an all-electric bus fleet powered by electricity generated by the Council's investments in solar farms. This project is a key component of Warrington's First Mile/Last Mile study.



¹<https://roadtraffic.dft.gov.uk/local-authorities/74>

²Local Data Company, Retail and Leisure Market analysis, Full Year 2018, May 2019

³Warrington LHNA, 2019

⁴Warrington borough website, Air quality and pollution page. Accessed on: <https://www.warrington.gov.uk/airquality>

ⁱAssumes Electric Bus Town Fund bid is successful, expression of interest has been submitted

ⁱⁱAssumes provision of bus and active mode facilities leads to mode shift away from private car

Figure 2-9 – Project E – Active Travel Programme – Logic Map

The proposal is aligned with various strategies that Warrington has developed over years, including Central 6 Masterplan, the LTP4 and the First/Last Mile Strategy. Key investments include:

- Re-designing key interior streets to make them more appealing to pedestrians and cyclists
- Consolidating and enhancing the Green Ring of parks and open spaces
- Establishing a Community Cycle Hub in the town centre
- Delivering a series of bus priority measures to facilitate a network of high-quality bus services.
- Overall, this project supports the delivery of all other projects in the town centre, by making it a pleasant area to live, work and spend time.

The project will improve the town centre public realm and accessibility through sustainable modes of transportation. It will also help give more visibility to the town centre’s great historical heritage. Finally, it will improve the attractiveness of existing green spaces, and make them more accessible for those travelling across and/or through the town.

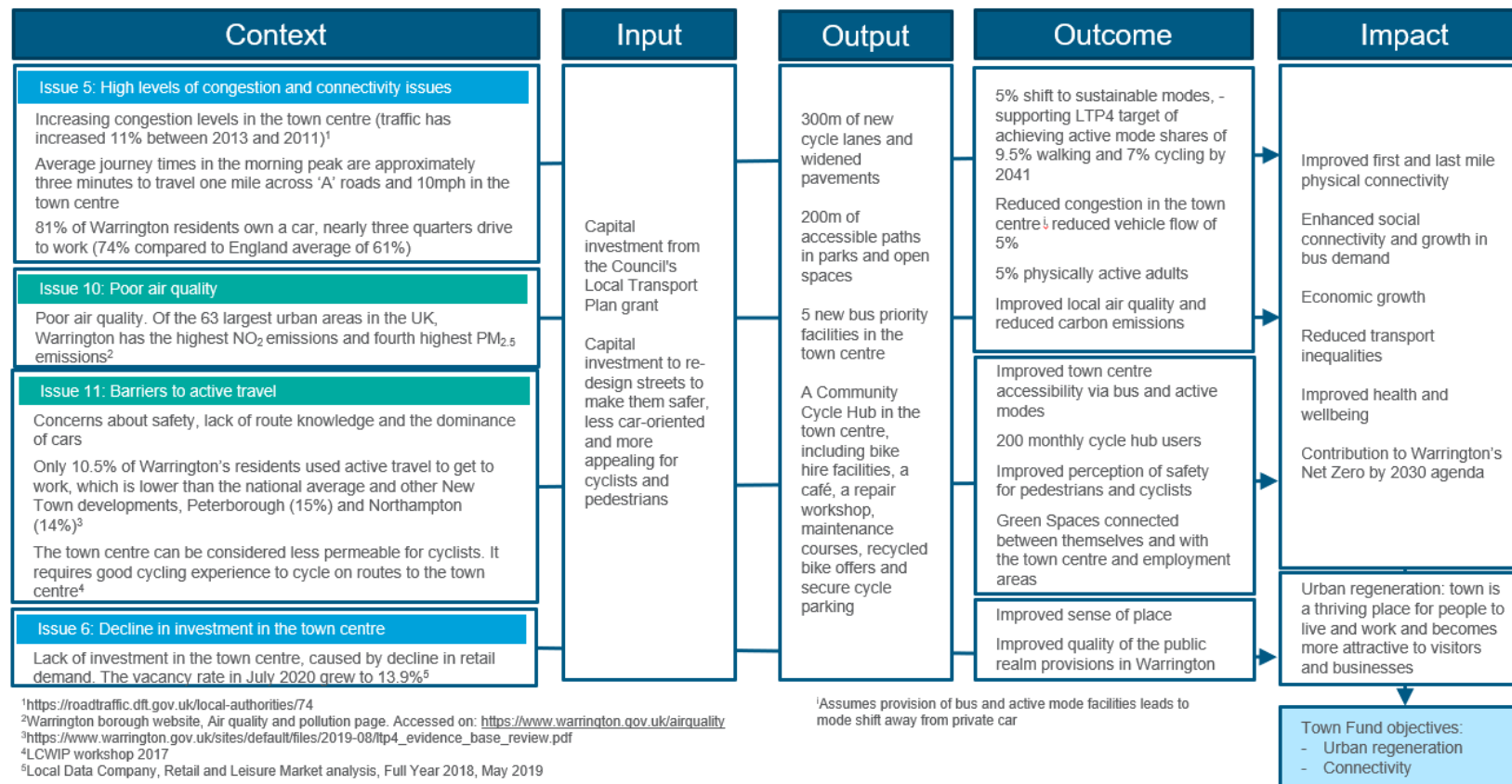


Figure 2-10 – Project F – Digital Enterprise Hub – Logic Map

The project will convert a Grade II listed building within the Bridge Street Conservation Area into a digital hub. This will have 3 principle functions: (i) support 'idea generation' with research capability (Learn) (ii) provide the tools to 'test the idea' (Experiment), and (iii) allocate incubator space to 'commercialise the idea' (Employ). The hub will be aimed at all aspects of digital and disruptive technologies such as 3D printing, augmented reality and the 4IR. There will also be a focus on the gaming sector which is worth an estimated £123bn per year globally.

The building will comprise a co-working space, a space for events and a lab. Short training programmes will be provided, with courses around STEM use, technology and business development so as to provide a full-fledged accelerator space for entrepreneurs. There is also the possibility to open the ground floor to visitors and make it a leisure destination in the town centre with exhibitions, cafes and conferences. More broadly, the project aims to repurpose surplus high street stock and at the same time increase the attractiveness of Bridge Street.

The project aligns with the needs to provide a space for digital workers and entrepreneurs, providing skills and support, as well as revitalising the town centre by making it an open space for visitors in the heart of the town. Thus, it is an important response to the COVID-19 pandemic and needs to commence in the next 12 months. It is therefore at the vanguard of the delivery plan so that the anticipated 30,000 job losses in Cheshire can be partly offset by encouraging people to set up their own businesses.

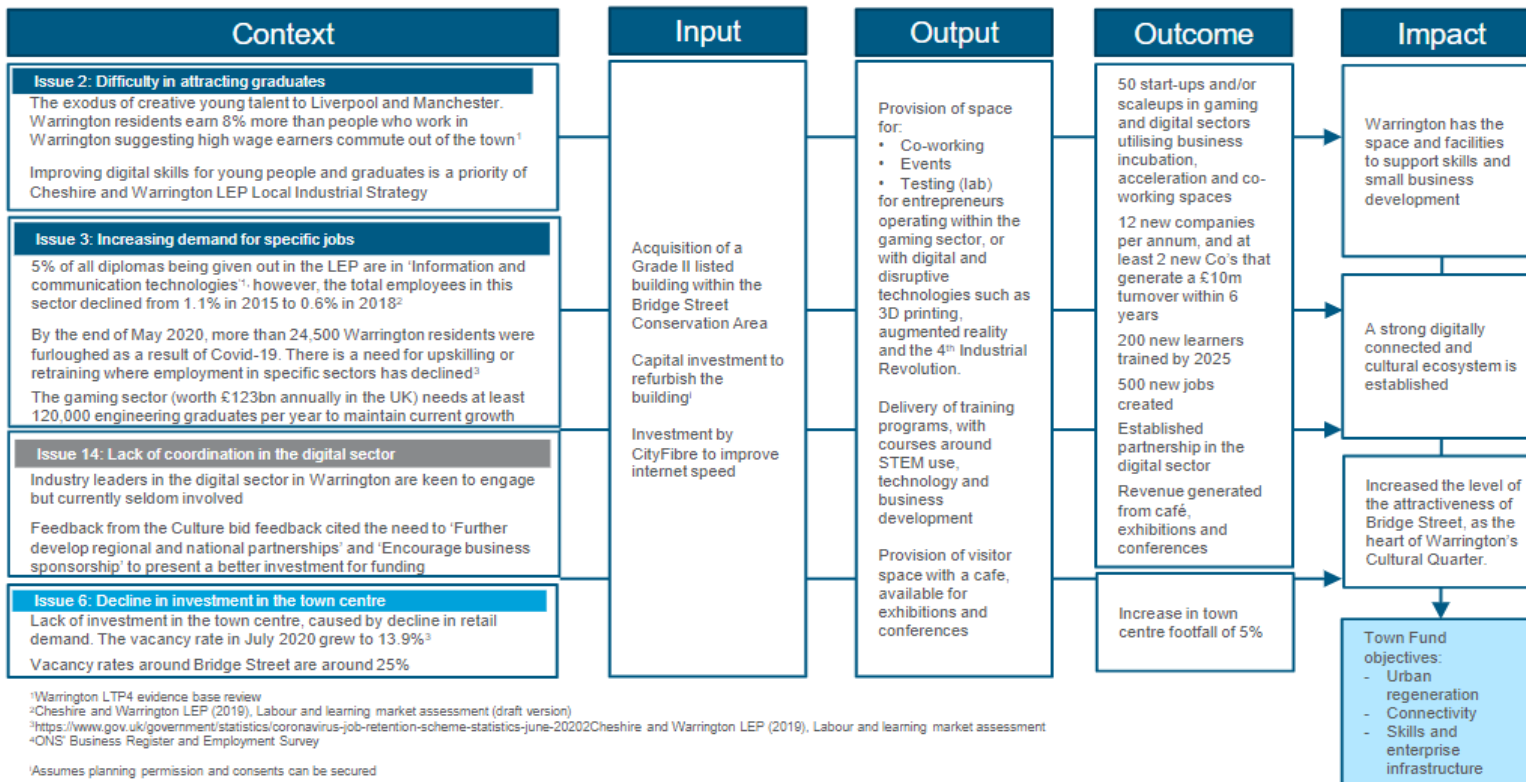
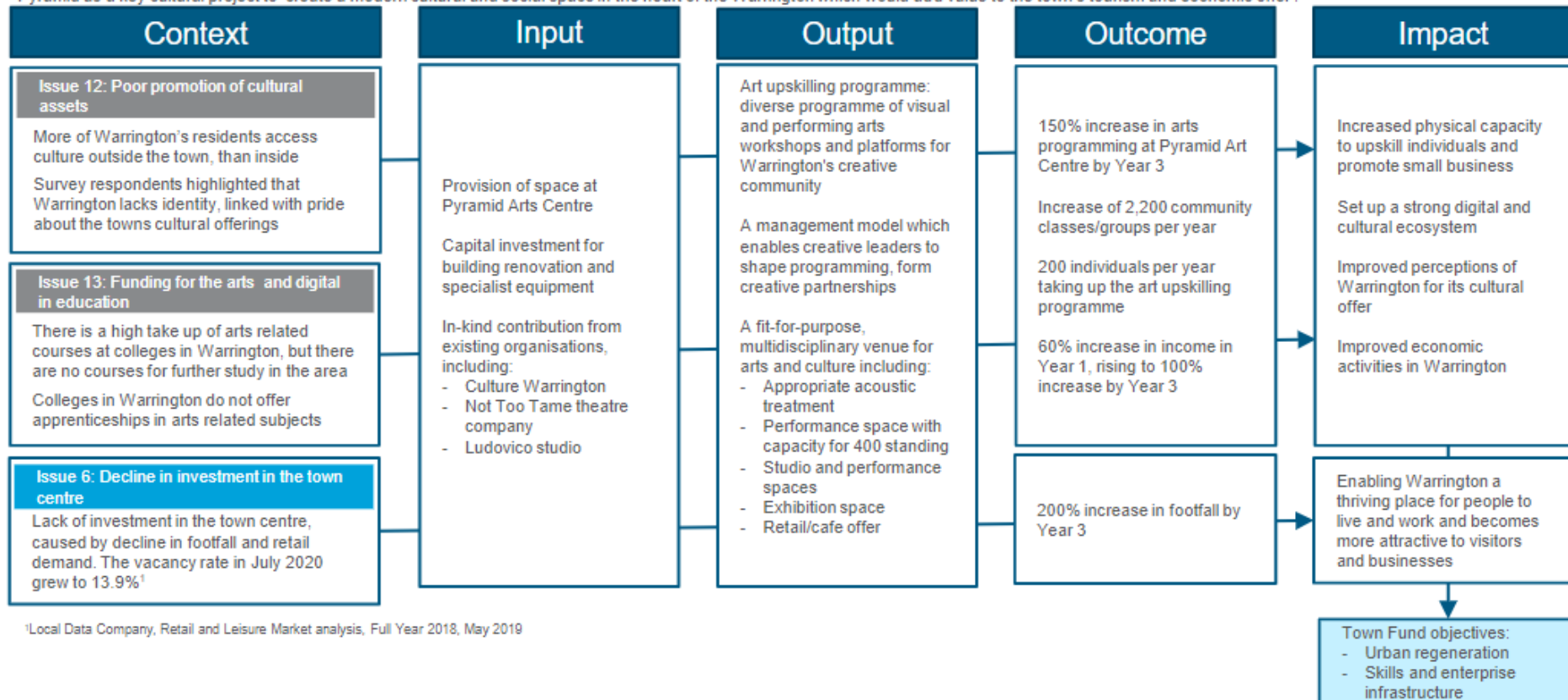


Figure 2-11 – Project G – Remastered Cultural Hub – Logic Map

This project will redesign Pyramid centre into an accessible, holistic, modern and flexible space for creative production, development, entrepreneurialism and industry growth. The Pyramid will strengthen its position as a multi-disciplinary venue for arts and culture, hosting high quality touring arts productions. Alongside this, new focus will be on nurturing local creativity and accelerating talent development. Pyramid aims to be a home for Warrington's creative community and a springboard for their careers – an environment that enables them to learn, collaborate and produce new and exciting multi-disciplinary work to be presented in a refreshed, fit-for-purpose and tech enabled venue.

As the only multi-arts centre in Warrington Town Centre, Pyramid is a key asset in delivering against the borough ambitions for cultural growth. The refreshed Warrington Town Centre Masterplan identifies Pyramid as a key cultural project to 'create a modern cultural and social space in the heart of the Warrington which would add value to the town's tourism and economic offer'.



¹Local Data Company, Retail and Leisure Market analysis, Full Year 2018, May 2019

2.4. Clean growth commitment

Warrington is committed to propose a sustainable development plan under its clean growth objectives, as explained in details **Annex D**. This is why all projects bring about more efficient practices and behaviours, including:

- The Advanced Construction Training Hub (project C), which will develop training in low carbon building material use and sustainable building.
- The all-electric bus depot (project D), which will support the full electrification of the bus fleet and release centrally located land for sustainable housing.
- The Digital Enterprise hub (Project F), that will support innovation in digital technologies where this will be increasingly needed.
- The Health and Wellbeing hub (Project B) will provide health and care services in the town centre, reducing car use to access the hospital and providers outside of the town centre.
- The Health and Social Care Academy (Project A), which will support workers integrating digital technology into their work to offer new service opportunities.
- The Active Travel programme (Project E), that will make the town centre more pleasant and encourage walking and cycling to replace car use.

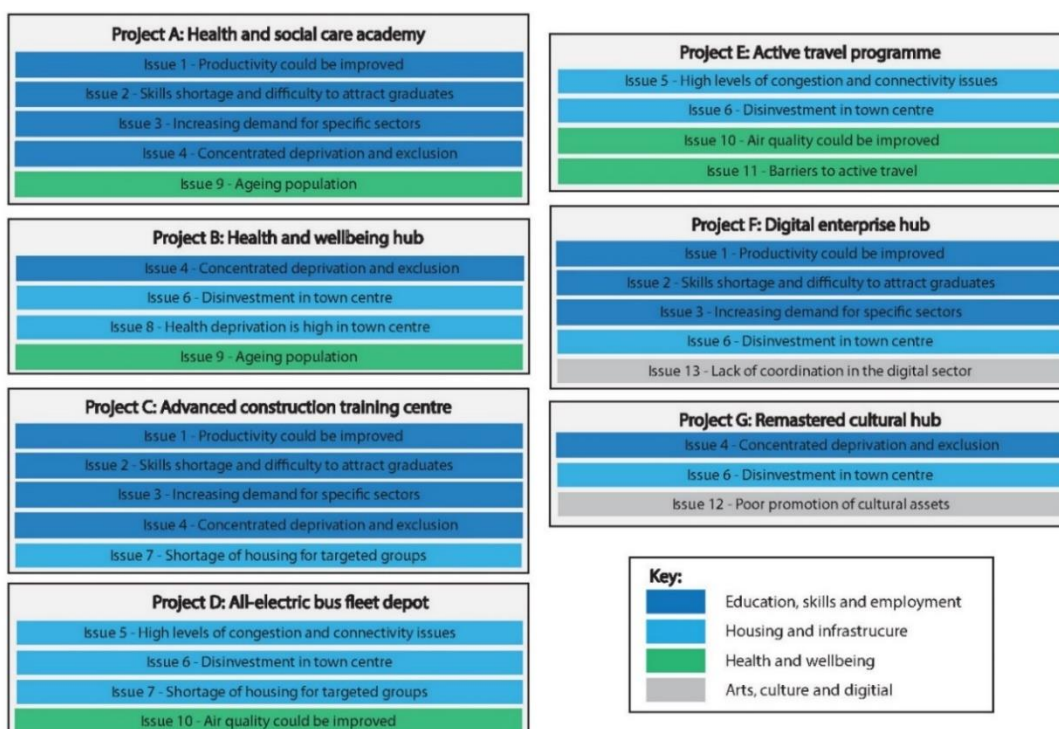
Energy usage from renewable sources will be measured along with investment in clean energy technology, as well as energy efficient building progress and non-recyclable waste reduction.

2.5. An integrated Town Investment Plan

A meeting with project promoters was arranged in July 2020 to identify synergies between projects. Projects show signs of integration for the following three reasons:

1. Each project addresses several identified issues: projects have been designed in response to the issues identified through workshops and research, as shown in **Figure 2-12** below.

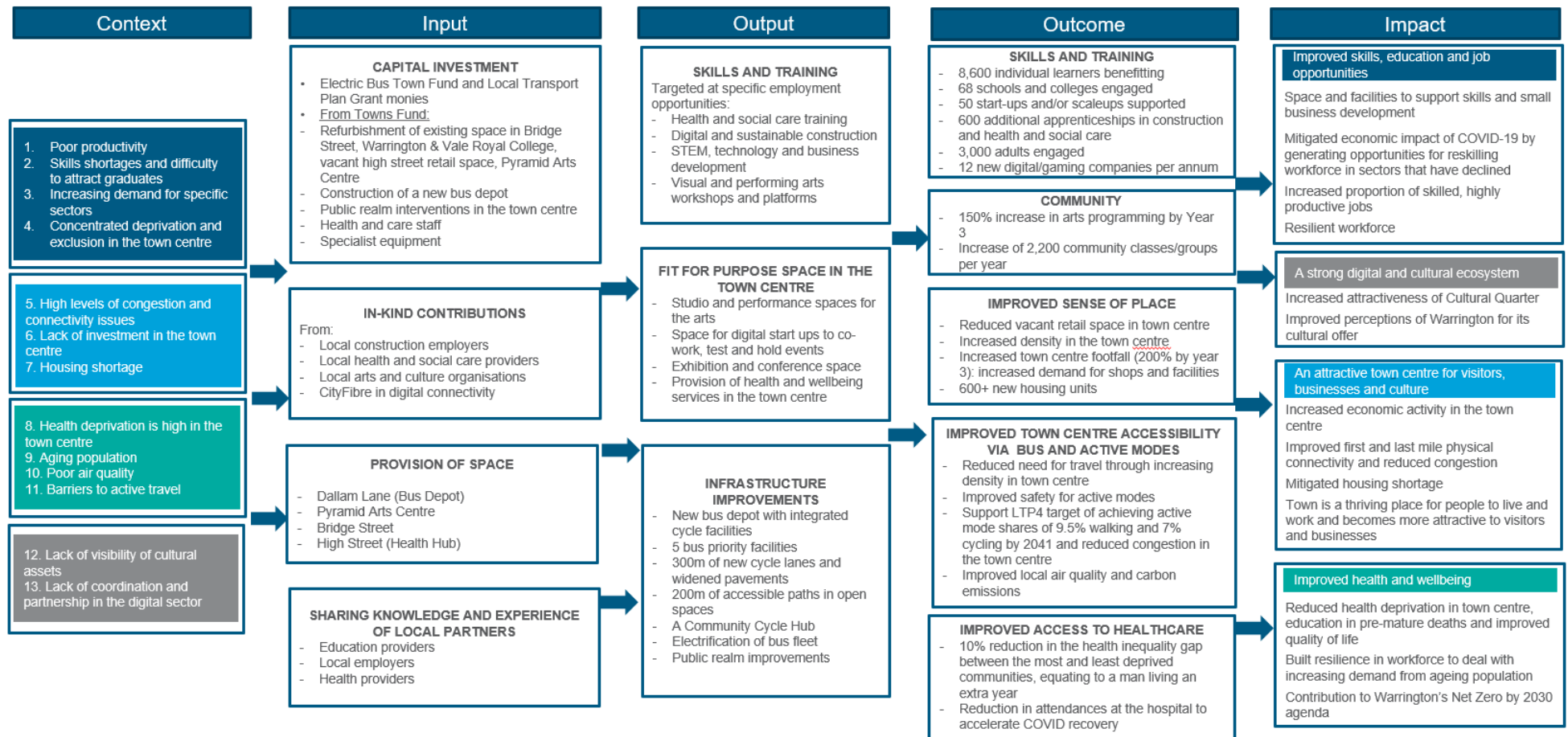
Figure 2-12 – How projects address identified issues



2. Projects are cross-thematic and contribute to achieve Warrington's objectives: Whilst projects were developed within thematic workshops, synergies between those themes were quickly been recognised. As mentioned previously (**Section 2.2.2**), three priority areas (environment, digital, improved public realm) came out across groups. This has helped shape projects that break silos and are guided by common objectives.
3. Most projects are located close to each other, in the town centre (Figure 2-4): Physical proximity will be key to support the success of individual projects. Project E (Active Travel Programme), by providing a more pleasant walking and cycling environment in the town centre, will significantly improve the visibility of other projects located there, such as Project B (Health and Wellbeing Hub), Project F (Digital Enterprise Hub) and Project G (Remastered Cultural Hub).

Because of the cross-thematic nature of projects, and because they are deeply rooted into Warrington's needs and set objectives, an overarching logic map is developed for the overall integrated TIP. It summarises the overall theory of change, listing key inputs, outputs, outcomes and joint impact - as shown in Figure 2-13.

Figure 2-13 – Overarching integrated town investment plan



Engagement and delivery



Top left: MyTown consultation page for Warrington Town Investment Plan
Top Right: Engagement with participants for Central 6 workshops and local engagement
Bottom Right: One of the many construction sites in Warrington Town Centre at the moment

3. Engagement and delivery

This chapter summarises our approach to the engagement and collaboration process carried out for developing this TIP and outlines our plan for future engagement, business case development and delivery of each project. The following sections are discussed in this chapter:

[Section 3.1 – Local engagement and collaboration](#)

[Section 3.2 – private sector commitment](#)

[Section 3.3 – Business case development and appraisal approach](#)

[Section 3.4 – Delivery plan with justification of deliverability.](#)

3.1. Local engagement and collaboration

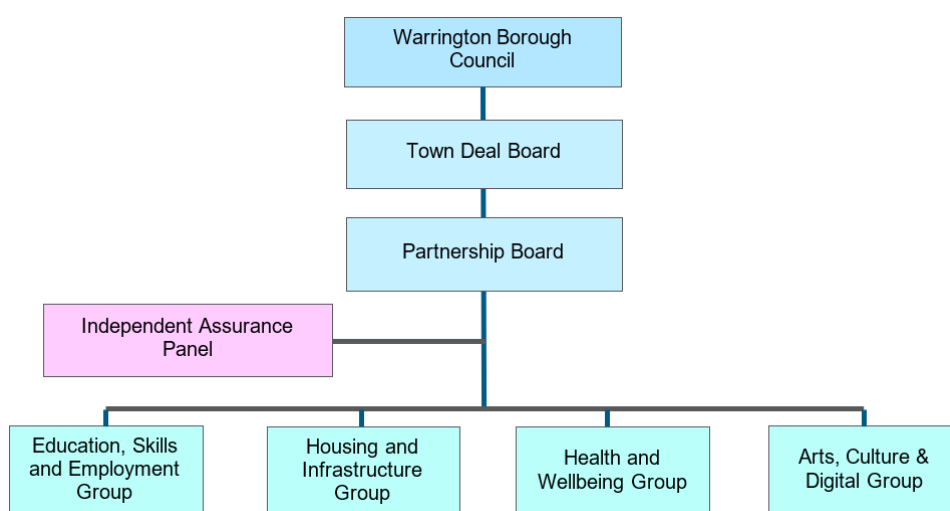
Three levels of engagement and collaboration have been created to develop this TIP and deliver the preferred projects, which are discussed in this section:

- The Town Deal Board
- The four thematic groups, and
- Community engagement.

3.1.1. Town Deal Board

The governance structure for producing this TIP, developing business cases and delivering each project is illustrated in **Figure 3-1**. Warrington Borough Council will remain accountable for designing and delivering each project through collaboration and support from businesses, stakeholders and communities.

Figure 3-1 – Warrington Towns Fund Governance Arrangements



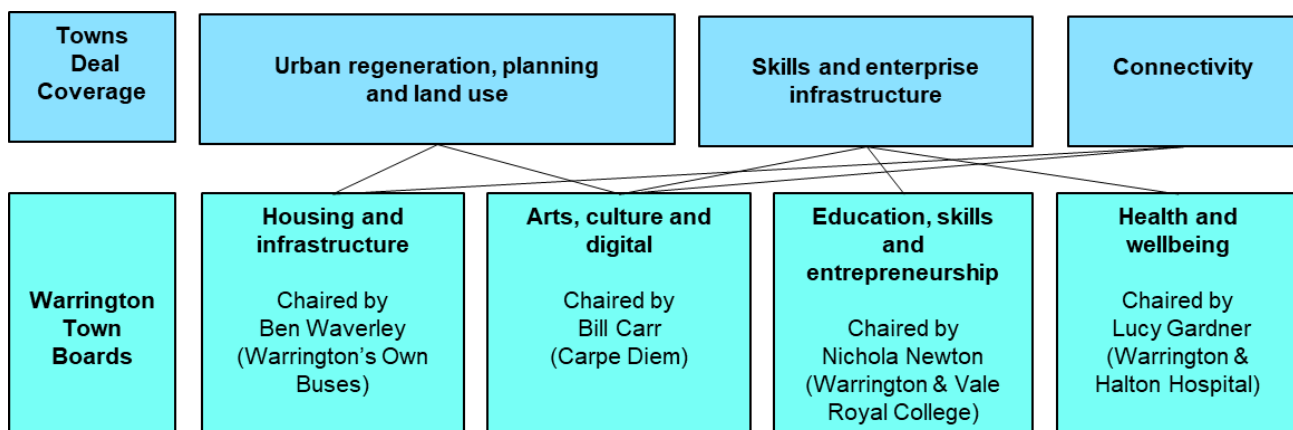
The Town Deal Board is comprised of 30 members who represent senior positions from a range of anchor institutions in Warrington, from both the public and private sectors including community groups. The Board also includes local Members of Parliament and representatives of the Cheshire and Warrington LEP. The Board is chaired by Matt Crompton, Managing Director of Muse Developments, who have provided development management services that oversaw the successful delivery of Time Square a £142m Council funded mixed-use regeneration scheme in the heart of Warrington town centre.

The Board was set up in January 2020 to discuss and agree the membership, Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct (**Annex 3**). Since then the Board has met 3 times (including during COVID-19 lockdown period) to fulfil its role and will continue for the successful delivery of this TIP; **Annex 3** shows the minutes of each Board meeting.

3.1.2. Thematic groups

Four thematic groups were created at the first Board meeting to help guide the Town Deal process and to act in a technical advisory and due diligence role during the development of this TIP and the associated proposed projects. Whilst closely aligned to the strategic themes set out in the Towns Fund Prospectus, the thematic groups were specifically adapted to reflect Warrington's strengths, opportunities and needs. Accordingly, this ensured that the potential Towns Fund projects sit clearly within a wider and fully holistic local economic growth context. The linkages between the three Town Deal themes and the four Warrington thematic groups is illustrated in **Figure 3-2**

Figure 3-2 – Relationship between Warrington thematic groups and Town Deal themes



An essential criterion for the selection of membership to the thematic groups was their level of engagement with the community. Prominent local businesses, civic and faith organisations were invited, such as local community forums, voluntary and community sector organisations, or Councils of the Voluntary Sector. Many of the members occupy roles within Warrington that allow them to apply local knowledge and insight on the barriers to driving local economic growth. Their insight and knowledge were utilised for the project identification and selection process including developing projects for this TIP.

A series of half-day workshops for each thematic group was organised in order to engage consistently with them for the following reasons:

- The first round of workshops took place in February 2020, and helped validate a long list of projects and shortlisted projects for the TIP
- The second round of workshops took place in June 2020. Projects were refined and re-evaluated given the COVID-19 situation, and seven proposed projects emerged
- The third round of workshops took place in July 2020, and specifications of each project were discussed.

Each thematic group was chaired by an expert in their respected field (**Figure 3-2**) who also represented their group at the Board meetings. A meeting was arranged in July 2020 with chairs to identify synergies between themes and how projects could be integrated.

Annex A provides a step-by-step explanation of the process of identifying and prioritising projects and how these were refined to address challenges related to COVID-19. A list of thematic group workshop participants and their job title can be found in **Annex 3**.

3.1.3. Community engagement

The community engagement has been undertaken in a number of ways as set out below; the outcome of this engagement was used to inform the generation of a long list of projects for this TIP for further analysis and discussions at thematic group and Board meetings:

- **#MyTown campaign (2020):** A webpage was created where the community could post their thoughts on potential projects. This enabled engagement directly with the community by hearing residents' ideas and concerns. To date more than 90 ideas have been submitted.
- **Central 6 Masterplan (2020):** This developed a 20-year regeneration masterplan that covers the central six wards of Warrington. The process included three separate rounds of consultation and generated almost 1,300 feedback forms.
- **Local Transport Plan 4 (2019):** This was subject to widescale consultation in 2019, held online and through a series of physical exhibitions that attracted 400 responses.
- **A Great and Curious Future (2020):** This document sets the vision for a varied cultural programme and was developed through a series of engagement activities, including stakeholder commissions and a survey that attracted 369 responses from the public.
- **Green Energy Strategy (2019):** Extensive engagement with stakeholders led to establishing a Climate Commission which brings together organisations such as Warrington Chamber of Commerce, the Business Improvement District and the Business Exchange.

Some of the feedback provided by the local communities is provided below. Additional details on each of these engagements can be found in **Annex B and Annex G**.

“Can we turn some of the vacant units into art or business spaces? Galleries? Studios? Can we do this in tandem with university of Chester or via Livewire/ Culture Warrington?”

“Warrington needs more regeneration of the town centre, apartments, shops, a theatre, library etc, for its citizens to want to spend time there. And Warrington needs to protect its green spaces...”

“With one of the recorded worst air pollution rates in the UK WBC should be making this as a priority especially as WBC has declared its attainment of low / zero carbon footprint in the near future. Bring it on WBC and be proactive in showing your willingness to embrace the Green initiative”

Phase 2 of WBC's Communications Plan will commence once the Investment Plan is submitted on the 31st July as explained in **Annex B**. A press release, social media postings and direct emails to stakeholders will announce that the bid has been submitted whilst highlighting some of the aspirational projects that have been put forward. Next steps will also be covered, with timescales.

If successful, Phase 3 will be planned accordingly, however will likely include:

- A defined website presence for each project under the “My Town” banner
- A Communication Plan will be developed for each project and will be included in the business case
- Regular reporting of progress via social media, with support from delivery partners and
- Regular press releases noting the progress of development of each project

There will also be scheduled interaction with the delivery team and ongoing governance function.

3.2. Private sector commitment

The success of proposed projects requires the leveraging of private sector investment to enable transformational and sustainable change. Warrington has structures and partnerships in place to support this to realise delivery of the proposed projects. A snapshot of these partnerships is listed below, with more details for each to be found in **Annex B**.

- **Warrington & Co Partnership Board:** Warrington & Co is a public / private sector board of stakeholders in Warrington and has been established for over 12 years. Its role is to provide advice, guidance and challenge to the regeneration and economic growth agenda. Key projects include the delivery of a new

50,000 sq.ft Grade A development in the town centre, a University Technical College, 2.5 million sq.ft of employment land and substantial investment in sustainable transport solutions.

- **Warrington Business Improvement District (BID):** Warrington BID has been in place for 2 years, which has had an immediate positive impact in coordinating and leveraging private sector investment into the town centre that has been used to match public sector funding. The BID is private sector led and is expected to leverage over £1.8m in investment through its first 5 years.
- **Private sector Joint Venture (JV) partnerships:** There are several JV partnerships that could be used to leverage substantial investment. This includes partnerships with housing developers, an energy company, the digital and creative arts sector, and several other regeneration projects as described in **Annex B**.

The proposed funding requirement from Towns Fund is built on this basis, where private investors have been engaged to ensure projects are set out with both their public sector grant, in-kind contributions and private sector investment.

3.3. Business case development and appraisal approach

WBC will remain accountable for developing proportionate business cases, covering all elements of HM Treasury's 5-case model, in line with the Green Book and best practice guidance issued within the Towns Deal Guidance. These business cases will be delivered within 12 months of agreeing the Heads of Terms and a forward plan with expected timescales for each business case and will go through our established Assurance Process. Each business case will be supported by a Monitoring & Evaluation Plan and Communication Plan.

To ensure that all funding decisions are transparent and based on impartial advice, the governance structure (**Figure 3-1**) provides a clear distinction between those acting as scheme promoters and those appraising business cases and advising decision makers, so that the WBC is acting on impartial advice on the merits of each business case.

As agreed at the first Board meeting, the following roles and responsibilities will be carried out for developing business cases and providing independent assurance:

- Thematic groups (working together with WBC officers) will act as the scheme promoters and will take the ownership of developing the business cases.
- The Partnership Board will help each thematic group in developing the business case and monitor the progress made in line with the agreed Heads of Terms and a forward plan.
- These business cases will be reviewed and scrutinised independently by an Assurance Panel in line with the Cheshire & Warrington LEP's Local Assurance Framework.
- Two Review meetings will be arranged between the scheme promoter and Independent Assurance Panel to allow them to discuss the appraisal and business case approach at the start of the process and then to provide an informal view on any gaps near the mid of their business case development process.
- The recommendations from the Independent Assurance Panel will be presented to the Board.
- The Board will assess the recommendations and advise WBC on the acceptability of each business case. If any significant changes to the business case are required, then the Board will delegate this action to the Partnership Board to work closely with the thematic groups to address the recommendations made by the Independent Assurance Panel.

3.4. Delivery plan with justification of deliverability

The vast majority of the capital assets needed to deliver the TIP are either already in the control and ownership of the local authority or its strategic partners who have been part of the development of this TIP and indeed are represented on the Town Deal Board. The only exception to this relates to existing surplus retail premises on Bridge Street that would be the home of the Digital Enterprise Hub and surplus retail space in Golden Square as the preferred location for the town centre Health & Wellbeing Hub. **Table 3-1** below provides an analysis of each project against a deliverability checklist which shows that all TIP projects are shovel ready supported by local businesses and communities.

Table 3-1 Analysis of TIP projects against deliverability checklist

Deliverability checklist	Project A - Health & Social Care Academy	Project B - Health & Wellbeing Hub	Project C - Advanced Construction Training Centre	Project D- All electric bus fleet depot	Project E - Active Travel Programme	Project F- Digital Enterprise Hub	Project G - Remastered Cultural Hub
Land Ownership secured	Yes, college owns land	N/A	Yes, college owns land	Yes, Council owns land	Yes, Council owns cycle lanes, paths, etc	N/A	Yes, Council owns land
Property secured	Yes, college owns land	Empty buildings to be identified and leased	Yes, college owns land	Yes, Council owns land	N/A	Need to acquire building	Yes, Council owns land
Capital costs identified	Yes, approved by College Board	Yes, agreed by stakeholders	Yes, approved by College Board	Yes, all scoped	Yes, all scoped	Yes, estimated	Yes, all scoped
External funding committed	To be explored if project approved	Potential for other orgs to contribute	To be explored – CITB potentially via LEP	Yes, £5.175m from LEP, £1.25m from Council	Sport England and others to be approached	Private sector to be approached	Arts Council to be approached
Delivery partners committed	Yes, College and University of Chester on board	Yes, hospital and health partners on board	Yes, College and University	Yes, Langtree part of construction discussion	Yes, to be tendered via WBC existing framework	Yes, to be tendered via WBC existing framework	Yes, to be tendered via WBC existing framework
Operational partners committed	Yes, College and University of Chester on board	Yes, hospital and health partners on board	Yes, College and University	Yes, Bus company agreed	Yes, to be tendered via WBC existing framework	Yes, to be tendered via WBC existing framework	Yes, Culture Warrington
Operational funding identified	Yes, College have committed to staff & running costs	Yes, hospital and health partners on board	Yes, College have committed to staff and running	Yes, Bus company agreed	Yes, to be tendered via WBC existing framework	Yes, to be tendered via WBC existing framework	Yes, Culture Warrington
Outputs agreed with operational partners	Yes, approved by College Board	Yes, agreed by stakeholders	Yes, approved by College Board	Yes, Bus company agreed	Yes, all headlines agreed	Yes, all headlines agreed	Yes, agreed by stakeholders
Overall Assessment	Yes, shovel ready	Yes, shovel ready	Yes, shovel ready	Yes, shovel ready	Yes, shovel ready	Yes, shovel ready	Yes, shovel ready

Table 3-2 below shows a high-level delivery plan for each TIP project. It is estimated that all projects will be delivered by Q3 2022/23, which is possible due to existing partnership with stakeholders, existing frameworks for procurement and meeting the deliverability requirements (**Table 3-1**).

Table 3-2 High level delivery plan for each TIP project

Project	Planning consent granted	Start on site	Practical completion	Operational start
Project A - Health & Social Care Academy	Q3 2020/21	1 Nov 20	31 Aug 21	Q3 2021/22
Project B - Health & Wellbeing Hub	Q3 2020/21	1 Jan 21	20 Nov 21	Q3 2021/22
Project C - Advanced Construction Training Centre	Q3 2020/21	1 Nov 20	31 Aug 21	Q3 2021/22
Project D- All electric bus fleet depot	Already secured	1 Dec 20	30 Nov 22	Q4 2022/23
Project E - Active Travel Programme	Q3 2020/21	31 Mar 21	31 Mar 23	Q1 2023/24
Project F- Digital Enterprise Hub	Q4 2020/21	1 Jan 21	30 Jun 21	Q2 2021/22
Project G - Remastered Cultural Hub	Q4 2020/21	1 Oct 20	30 Jun 22	Q2 2022/23

The total funding ask from Towns Fund is £26.56m, which will allow to generate more than £64m of GVA in Warrington. A breakdown of funding asks for each financial year and project is provided in **Table 3-3**.

Table 3-3 Warrington Towns Fund - Ask for each project

Project	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2025/26	Total Ask
Project A - Health & Social Care Academy	£0.61m	£0.60m			£1.21m
Project B - Health & Wellbeing Hub	£0.03m	£2.06m	£1.66m		£3.75m
Project C - Advanced Construction Training Centre	£0.10m	£2.80m	£1.50m		£4.40m
Project D- All electric bus fleet depot	£0.50m	£0.50m			£1.00m
Project E - Active Travel Programme	£1.00m	£2.85m	£2.85m		£6.70m
Project F- Digital Enterprise Hub	£0.80m	£2.70m			£3.50m
Project G - Remastered Cultural Hub	£0.05m	£3.85m	£2.10m		£6.00m
Total Ask in year	£3.09m	£15.36m	£8.11m		£26.56m

A check and challenge session was arranged with the Towns Fund Delivery Partner (TFDP) on 27th of July to get their feedback and recommendation for improvements on the draft TIP. This TIP includes the incorporation of their recommendations. A representative from the TFDP also attended the Board meeting on 24th of July.