



**Warrington Borough Council
Local Economic Assessment
‘The Story of Place’**

March 2011



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Introduction

- 1.1 Section 69 of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction (LDEC) Act (2009) made provision for a new local authority economic assessment duty. This requires all county councils and unitary councils to prepare an assessment of the economic conditions of their area. The first published assessment must be completed by each Authority by 31st March 2011.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Local Economic Assessment is to provide an evidence base which informs the future strategies and policies of the Local Authority, including the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework. The final document has been described as the 'Story of Place' but this story is based on the careful analysis of the available statistical economic evidence for the area.
- 1.3 This document, prepared for Warrington Borough Council is the 'Story of Place'. It uses all the statistical data available and then provides a summary of the current and future position of the Borough by identifying the key aspects of the economic evidence. The full set of data used in compiling this report is set out in a more comprehensive statistical annex. The annex also sets out a comprehensive table of the sources of material.
- 1.4 In order to make an informed judgment about the economy of Warrington, this document uses trends identified over time and geographic comparators. Where available and relevant the geographic comparators are:
 - National
 - Regional (North West England)
 - Sub-regional (Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East)
- 1.5 In addition we have used 5 comparator Unitary Authorities from the DCLG family of Local Authorities considered similar to Warrington. The Authorities selected were:
 - Peterborough
 - Derby
 - Swindon
 - North Lincolnshire
 - South Gloucestershire
- 1.6 The findings of the assessment are set out in four main sections:
 - People and Communities
 - Business and Enterprise
 - Sustainable Economic Growth
 - Economic Geography
- 1.7 The LEA Appendix contains the data which has informed the 'Story of Place'. A significant amount of the data supporting the Local Economic Assessment is based on the existing Census data from 2001 which the ONS then extrapolates by carrying out annual surveys in various topic areas. The 2001 census data is now increasingly out of date and there is a limit to the accuracy of the surveys completed by the ONS. The results of the 2011 Census should be ready in time to review and update the Local Economic Assessment in 2013.
- 1.8 Whilst it is intended that the evidence contained in the statistical annex is regularly updated, there is no requirement to update the story of place on an annual basis since it is unlikely that many of the trends identified in the document will change over the course of a single year. It is therefore recommended that the 'Story of Place' is revisited after the 2011 Census when there will be a significant change in available data.

Warrington SWOT

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strong and well functioning labour market which outperforms the national average in terms of levels and duration of unemployment. • The town has strengths in growth sectors of software, telecommunications, energy and business services. • Residents possess a high level of skills and are more likely than average to hold management and professional positions. • A centre of economic gravity, providing higher paid employment opportunities for residents of neighbouring Authorities. • Birchwood is a regionally important employment location. • Warrington has exceptional road and rail connections and is also close to Manchester airport. London is now less than 2 hours away. • Transport infrastructure and the geographic position of Warrington links companies to a very large commuter pool and customer base. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively low population growth over the last decade which can be attributed to no net international migration. • Growth in GVA per head in the NUTS3 area of Halton and Warrington is growing at a lower rate than the average for England. • Public transport links to the New Town employment sites are poor especially from less affluent neighbourhoods. • The town centre has a relatively low concentration of employment with limited office developments and this has an impact on the extent and diversity of the leisure and retail offer. • Reliance on car use, incomplete New Town infrastructure and River Mersey crossing points create town centre and other localised congestion at peak times. • The dramatic decline in manufacturing has reduced the diversity of the employment base. • There are a number of less affluent areas in Warrington with pockets of deprivation. Whilst suffering dramatic inequality, overall, however, the disparity between the most and least affluent areas is less significant than some neighbouring Authorities. The presence of more affluent areas in the town may, however, increase the perception of disparity.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential development sites can mitigate the impact of the ageing population although housing completions levels will need to remain at at least the level set out in the Development Plan. • Development sites and the confluence of transport services can help support a greater office concentration in Warrington town centre. • Skills, communication links, established sectors and development sites continue to place Warrington in a strong position for further economic growth. • Proactive company engagement and promotion can reinvigorate levels of development and corporate investment. • Raise the targets and aspirations for the Borough by more frequently comparing the town to locations outside the NW. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The population of Warrington is older than the national average with a “New Town Demographic” heading towards retirement. • House building targets need to be met to ensure a balanced population which is economically active that will support continued economic growth. • Warrington’s strong education performance relative to national and North West averages must continue to maintain the skills advantage that currently exists in the area. • The continued dispersal of employment sites may make the town less environmentally sustainable if they continue to rely heavily on car borne commuting. • Warrington must take account of and be responsive to the strong employment opportunities that exist in Manchester, Liverpool and Daresbury.

Business and Enterprise

This chapter contains information on the following:

- Structure of the Local Economy
- Enterprise and Innovation
- Business Wealth and GVA Growth

Key Summary

- 2.1 By a large number of measures, Warrington is a successful location for business and enterprise. In 2008, there were 8,033 businesses that employed 115,418 people. This was an increase from 6,738 businesses (19% rise) employing 101,047 people (14% rise) in 1998¹.
- 2.2 The Local Authority had a Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) claimant rate of 3.5% in June 2010 which is below the average for England (3.7%) and the rate has been at or below the national average over the last 5 years².
- 2.3 The strength of business and enterprise in Warrington draws people into the Borough. The daytime population of Warrington at the 2001 Census was recorded as being 8% larger than the resident population³. Since 2001, employment in the Borough has grown faster than the population which has created significant commuting patterns.
- 2.4 Despite the many headline strengths of business and enterprise in Warrington, in 2009, Warrington's residents earned more on average than the average earnings reported in Warrington workplaces. This almost certainly reflects the employment draw of Manchester and Liverpool to residents of the borough.
- 2.5 Furthermore, despite the business and employment growth in the Local Authority area, GVA growth in the NUTS3 area of Halton and Warrington (smallest economic geography for GVA) grew 8 percentage points slower than the average for England between 1998 and 2007. If this trend continues Warrington GVA per head will be surpassed by that of the England and the UK⁴.
- 2.6 The result is that for business and enterprise, as with many other factors, the performance of Warrington can appear completely different according to the comparators used. As a high performing Local Authority in the context of the North West, Warrington could be judged an economic success story, but compared to many average measures for the UK the Warrington economy could be argued to under-perform.
- 2.7 Within the headline figures for business and enterprise there are a large number of important spatial variations and structural changes. It is therefore useful to consider the business and enterprise section against the sub-headings of:
 - Structure of the Local Economy
 - Enterprise and Innovation
 - Business Wealth and GVA Growth

These sections are considered in detail below.

1 - ONS from NOMIS Claimant Count 2010

2 - ONS census data 2001 and ONS population projections

3 - ONS Annual survey of hours and earnings 2009

4 - ONS Regional GVA Accounts 1995-2007

Structure of the Local Economy

Workplace Analysis

- 2.8 The Annual Business Inquiry reports that in the decade to 2008 banking, finance and insurance surpassed distribution, hotels and restaurants⁵ as the sector with the most businesses in Warrington. Between them these two sectors accounted for 63% of business activity. In fact, analysis suggests that the definition of “financial services” includes a broad range of business, but nevertheless it is clear that economy of the former manufacturing town of Warrington is now focused on the service sector. In 2008 there were 458 manufacturing companies reported in Warrington. This represented less than 6% of the business base and an absolute decline of 16%.
- 2.9 Whilst the decline in Warrington’s manufacturing workplaces as a proportion of the total economy is mirrored by the decline in England as a whole and the comparator locations used in this study, the growth of banking, finance and insurance in Warrington has actually been outstripped by higher growth levels in the majority of comparator locations, the North West and England as a whole.
- 2.10 The resultant position is that in 2008 Warrington was a location where manufacturing and construction had a smaller proportion of businesses in the economy than the average for England, but banking, finance and insurance and distribution, hotels and restaurants make up a stronger proportion of businesses than the average.
- 2.11 In 2008 most businesses were located in the central ward of Bewsey and Whitecross with Birchwood registering as a secondary location. The large number of small businesses, however, registered in locations such as Lymm mean that registered workplaces are scattered across the Borough⁶.

Employees Analysis

- 2.12 The analysis of employees illustrates that the banking, finance and insurance and distribution, hotels and restaurants sectors also provide the majority of employment in Warrington (63% of workplaces). The small scale of these companies’ means, however, that their share of employment is just over 50%. The analysis of employees also shows a strong rise in public sector employment and a strong decline in manufacturing.
- 2.13 When Warrington’s position is calibrated against comparator locations, it is apparent that the 69% rise in public sector employment during the period 1998-2008 is a very strong rise. The equivalent rise in England during the same period was only 25%. However, the impact of this rise on the Warrington economy is not as dramatic as it appears as the growth in employment started from a relatively low base. The proportion of staff employed by the public sector in Warrington, at 22% remains well below the average for England of 26%. The Warrington labour market is therefore at no greater level of risk from public sector cuts than many other Local Authority areas. In fact the Centre for Cities Report 2011 identified potential job losses in the public sector in Warrington to be around 1 - 1.5% of all jobs, rating Warrington 58th in the country in terms of impact.
- 2.14 The low proportion of employees involved in manufacturing is however a significant finding. With only 7.6% of the Warrington workforce involved in manufacturing, Warrington has an economy that employs a smaller proportion of people in manufacturing than across the North West region (11.6%) and in England as a whole (10.1%). This is also the case when compared to any of the Local Authorities in the family of comparators North Lincolnshire (22.8%), Derby (18.7%), Swindon (13.2%), S. Gloucestershire (12.7%) and Peterborough (11.7%). This low level of manufacturing employment represents a remarkable transformation of Warrington over the last century from a manufacturing hub to one of the more de-industrialised locations in England.
- 2.15 When employment concentration is considered, the spatial distribution of economic activity across Warrington becomes clearer. Employment in Warrington is focused on the town centre (31%) but there is a secondary concentration in Birchwood (16%) and other local centres to a lesser extent. The distribution of employment owes much to the New Town masterplan which has resulted in a town centre that is less of an economic focal point than those that have emerged in comparator locations.

5 - Annual Business Inquiry industry groupings include distribution, hotels and restaurants as one industry group.

6 - Annual Business Inquiry 2008 – this data source used for all the points to 2.19

Sector Analysis

- 2.16 Whilst the focus of the Warrington economy has shifted towards the service sector, it is useful to consider which specific sectors have a strong or weak representation in the Borough. Location quotients can be used to look at the relative strength of employment in an area compared to the national average. A location quotient of 2 suggests that the sector employs double the number of employees than could be expected in an average location in England, conversely a location quotient of 0.5 suggests half the concentration that could be expected.
- 2.17 A large number of manufacturing sectors have a location quotient below 0.5 in Warrington. There are others, however, which may be considered to be higher value or knowledge based such as the chemical sector which has a location quotient of 2.4. It would appear that Warrington also has the legacy of a higher proportion of employees remaining in sectors than have recorded strong national declines such as leather (2.24) and basic metals (4.06).
- 2.18 The sectors within Warrington's strong service economy that have a high location quotient are architecture and engineering activities (2.31), telecommunications (2.7); and employment service (2.0) activities. In addition, the energy and utility and construction type activities are also strong – these include sewerage (2.99); electricity, gas steam and air conditioning (1.97) and civil engineering (1.98).
- 2.19 The service sector activities which are under-represented in terms of the proportion of employment are insurance (0.04) and scientific research and development (0.31). Daresbury, just outside of the Local Authority boundary would go some way to addressing the low location quotient for scientific research and development.

Enterprise and Innovation

- 2.20 Warrington has a strong base of significant companies with 25 of the largest 500 North West companies by turnover and profitability based in the Borough. This base reflects, in part, the strength of the various sectors identified in the location quotients for the town. The companies include United Utilities, European Metal Recycling, Opal Telecom, Done Brothers, GB Oils, Borregaard Industries and Eddie Stobart⁷.
- 2.21 As a business location, Warrington continues to perform strongly. Growth in VAT businesses was greater than England and the NW region as a whole in nine out of the eleven years from 1997. In 2007, the most recently published year, there was a 6% increase in VAT registered businesses in Warrington which was more than double the rate of increase for England and a higher rate than any of the comparator locations studied⁸ The growth of businesses registered in Warrington has not, however, resulted in a measurably high level of entrepreneurialism. The total number of VAT businesses registered per head of population remains below the average for England⁹.
- 2.22 The analysis of VAT registered businesses supports the findings from the Annual Business Inquiry that Warrington is a service sector oriented location. The sector definition identifies strengths in wholesale, retail and repair as well as real estate, renting and business activities. This is broadly consistent with the ABI data albeit it suggests that 'financial services' in ABI data is more likely to represent more general business activities.
- 2.23 VAT survival rates in each of the first 3 years (for companies created in 2003) are lower than for England although after 5 years the rate is higher than England. The slightly lower initial levels of business survival vary according to the year and do not impact on the level of VAT registered businesses set out above since these figures are growth in net VAT registered businesses and therefore already include business failure.
- 2.24 In terms of innovation, the location quotient demonstrating the proportion of employment in firms carrying out research and development activities compared to the national average suggests that Warrington firms employ a third of the national average for this particular activity. At a prima facie level this suggests a low level of activity in research and development within companies located in the Borough. This may under estimate the level of activity, however, because it will not represent research and development being carried out as a secondary activity¹⁰.

7 - North West Business Insider

8 - 2.21 - 2.23 use ONS VAT registration data

9 - Mickledore analysis of 2007 ONS VAT registration data compared to 2007 ONS mid-year population estimate

10 - Annual Business Inquiry 2008

- 2.25 The majority of the VAT registered businesses are engaged in the sector activities of wholesale, retail and repairs and real estate, renting and business. This may also suggest a limitation in high levels of innovation and value added activity¹¹.
- 2.26 There is little opportunity to undertake research and development activity alongside a higher education institute within Warrington. The University of Chester has a predominantly teaching based focus and the closest larger research establishments are the University of Liverpool, the University of Manchester and Salford University.
- 2.27 As a result the level of innovation and value added activity within the town is unclear and may be somewhat limited. One area of measurement which can provide further data in this area is the regional Gross Value Added data and this is considered below.

Business Wealth & Gross Value Added (GVA) Growth

- 2.28 GVA is only measured at a NUTS3 level rather than by single Local Authorities. As a result, GVA data is only available for the area of Warrington and Halton, which may mask more local variances. In the period 1998-2007 total GVA increased in Warrington and Halton by 50% to £7bn. This increase outstripped the North West as a region which grew by 48%.
- 2.29 The fact that GVA grew slightly faster than the regional average only provides part of the analysis. In fact, the various NUTS3 areas of the NW grew at widely differing growth rates from 27% in West Cumbria to 57% in both Manchester South and Liverpool. These growth rates support the view that UK economic growth over the last decade has been disproportionately weighted towards urban centres rather than smaller centres such as Warrington and Halton.
- 2.30 Perhaps more importantly for Warrington and Halton, the GVA growth of the North West region has been out-performed by England. England grew at 59% during the period 1998-2007 and as a result Warrington (which grew at 50%) has become a relatively less important place to the overall English economy during this period. However, with GVA of £22,324 per head, Warrington and Halton GVA levels are still higher than the UK and England average (£20,430 and £20,458 per head respectively).
- 2.31 The main reason that Warrington and Halton's GVA did not grow as strongly as the national average in this period was because GVA growth in business services and finance (81%) and public administration (57.6%) in Warrington and Halton were significantly below the average for England (93% and 74% respectively). Whilst the Warrington and Halton economy is weighted towards business services, it has not generated the wealth that has been generated by the sector in other locations suggesting that business services companies in Warrington and Halton are in lower value activities. Perhaps most surprisingly is that Warrington & Halton employment growth in public administration during the period was 25% faster than for the rate in England but GVA growth for this sector in Warrington and Halton was lower than in England.
- 2.32 A further reason for GVA growth in Warrington and Halton falling behind England as a whole was that production GVA in Warrington and Halton actually fell in absolute output terms during the period (-2%). Growth in GVA for production activities across the comparator locations including England was also low (+2% in England) but did not fall in any of the locations studied - in Peterborough GVA in production activities increased by 67% during the same period.
- 2.33 GVA growth in Warrington and Halton in the period 1998-2007 outstripped the average for England in other broad categories measured in the NUTS3 analysis. These sectors include agriculture, construction and distribution.
- 2.34 When GVA growth is considered on a per capita basis, a similar pattern emerges. GVA growth per capita in Warrington and Halton outperformed the NW regional average but was out accelerated by England as a whole. It is important to note however, that the level of GVA per capita is at present, higher in Warrington and Halton than the average for England as a whole.

2.35 Whilst there are above average levels of GVA per head in Warrington, the fact that the NUTS3 area includes Halton makes it difficult to make precise statements about the performance of Warrington alone. Nevertheless it is clear that despite having a strongly performing labour market, an ability to draw in labour from surrounding areas, growth in VAT Businesses in excess of the average for England, modern business premises and infrastructure, regionally significant companies and strengths in some higher growth industries such as telecommunications the GVA growth figures below the UK average are unexpectedly low¹².



12 - ONS NUTS3 Regional GVA data

People and Communities

This chapter contains information on the following:

- Demography
- Labour Market
- Economic and Social Exclusion
- Skills

Key Summary

- 3.1 In 2009, Warrington's population was estimated at 197,800 and it has grown almost continuously since 1981. The rate of change, however, between 2002 and 2009 slowed to an annual average growth of 3.3% compared to 6.9% over the same period 20 years earlier. The population growth rate over the last seven years has outstripped the regional average but is lower than the average for England¹³.
- 3.2 One of the reasons for the relatively low population growth between 2004-2009 is that unlike England as a whole, Warrington has recorded net outward international migration¹⁴.
- 3.3 Population growth has an increased importance as an economic indicator in Warrington because the current Warrington population is now older than the national average and what can be considered as a 'New Town demographic' is moving increasingly close to retirement. The likely reduction in the economic activity rate could in turn impact on the economic performance of the local area.
- 3.4 The potential changes in the labour market are, however, still to come. Warrington has a very high performing labour market. Economic activity rates, unemployment rates, average period of unemployment and vacancy rates all compare favourably not only on a regional basis but also against the national averages¹⁵.
- 3.5 Employees within the labour market are more likely to have skills above NVQ4 and be employed in managerial or professional positions than for England as a whole¹⁶. The concentration of higher level skills in the Borough may be reduced over time by the relative underperformance of schools in Warrington at post 16 level compared to neighbouring Authorities¹⁷.
- 3.6 The distribution of opportunities in the labour market, the concentration of skills and the likely residential areas where individuals have higher level occupations is skewed towards South Warrington¹⁸. Lower levels of skills and labour market outcomes are located in the more central areas but the disparity in Warrington between the least and most affluent is not as wide as in many neighbouring Authorities¹⁹.
- 3.7 One area where Warrington has recorded a high level of deprivation in 2007 was in crime. Crime levels in Warrington have increased since 2002 but whilst the rate of change has exceeded the national average throughout this period, overall crime levels in Warrington equate to roughly the average for the UK²⁰.
- 3.8 These issues are now considered in more detail against the sub-headings of:
- Demography
 - Labour Market
 - Economic and Social Exclusion
 - Skills

13 - ONS Local Area Migration Indicators 2009

14 - ONS Mid Year Population Estimates 1981-2009

15 - ONS Claimant Count data 2010

16 - ONS Annual Population Survey 2009

17 - DCSF performance tables 2009

18 - ONS Census 2001

19 - DCLG Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007

20 - Home Office crime statistics 2010

Demography

- 3.9 Warrington's population changed considerably in 1968 and the years following Warrington's designation as a 'New Town'. During the growth of the New Town, people relocated from other parts of the North West and UK which resulted in rapid growth and the development of new suburbs.
- 3.10 Data on population growth by Local Authorities is available on a consistent basis since 1981. This data shows that population growth in Warrington was exceeding the percentage growth rate for Great Britain as a whole in nearly every year until 1999 (the exceptions were 1991 and 1992). In 1999 the population growth in Warrington and Great Britain were the same and in every year since this point the national figures have shown growth as above the rate recorded in Warrington²¹.
- 3.11 Population growth in Warrington has in fact more than halved in rate, with the average annual growth in the period 1981-1991 measuring 0.85% and the growth in the period 1999-2009 measuring 0.39%. The rate of growth in Great Britain as a whole has conversely increased. In the period 1981-1991 the average annual rate of growth for Great Britain was 0.18% but by 1999-2001 the rate of growth had almost increased threefold to 0.51%.
- 3.12 Analysis of population trends since 2004 reveal that population growth in Warrington has been mainly driven by intra-UK migration and natural population growth (births exceeding deaths). The increasing rate of population for England, however, has been driven by strong international migration as well as the growth generated by natural change²².
- 3.13 The Warrington population growth rate has been largely unaffected by international migration. At a time of national debate about international migration, Warrington has in fact recorded net outward international migration since 2004.
- 3.14 The net outflow in international migration has resulted in Warrington having an unusually homogenous population which has a low ethnic mix and a very low level of residents who were born outside the UK. Warrington has a much higher 'white British' population (96.1%) than the average for England (87%) although Cheshire West and Chester (96.2%) and Cheshire East (96.4%) have slightly higher levels. Warrington also recorded fewer people born outside the UK (5%) than both Cheshire Authorities (both 6%)²³.
- 3.15 The rapid growth in population in the period from New Town creation (1968) to 1999 followed by more modest growth since 1999 has resulted in a demographic structure which differs from England as a whole. In 2008 Warrington had a population pyramid which had a greater proportion of residents in each five year age band between the ages of 35-69 than in England as a whole. In England 44% of residents fell into this age range in 2008 whilst 48% were within this age range in Warrington. The difference in this proportion against the national average is significant. In every five year age band up to the age of 35 and over the age of 69 Warrington has a smaller proportion of residents than the national average. This finding is attributable to the creation of the New Town and is referred to in this report as the 'New Town demographic'. In the 1970s and 1980s aspiring families moved to Warrington and created a town with a high level of economic activity and now that group of people is ageing together²⁴.
- 3.16 The result of the 'New Town demographic' is that a significantly greater proportion of Warrington's population is moving towards retirement age than the national average. This is significant given the country is already concerned about the burden that an ageing population may place on a proportionately smaller working population. This ageing demographic has wide implications for Warrington in terms of economic activity, economic growth, consumer spending, range of leisure, retail and social service activities required and the availability of services in a town with a pattern of development that has placed a heavy reliance on private car transport.

21 - ONS mid year population estimates 1981-2009 used for 3.10 and 3.11

22 - ONS Local Area Migration Indicators 2004-2009

23 - ONS Census 2001 (ethnic mix) and ONS Annual Population Survey 2009

24 - ONS mid year population estimates by age range 2008

- 3.17 The ONS has projected that population growth in Warrington will accelerate again in the period 2010-2020. The ONS predict population growth for Warrington over the decade of 5.6% compared to 3.9% in the decade to 2009²⁵.
- 3.18 The growth of 5.6% will be based on extrapolations of anticipated growth for England broken down on a regional and local basis. With an ageing population which is increasingly moving outside the age range of fertility, and a track record which does not suggest that high levels of international migration are likely, the higher growth figure for the next decade appears to be a challenging estimate.
- 3.19 The population growth rates are important to consider, because if the growth rate of 5.6% is achieved, Warrington is still expected to have 19.4% of its population over the age of 65 in 2020. This compares to a national average of 18.9%. Without population growth the differential between the proportions of the population of over 65 years of age will be higher.
- 3.20 House building targets have been set at a level which will achieve a rate of growth for Warrington but the extent to which this housing accommodates a rising population will depend on both the type of supply and the average size of households in the Borough.
- 3.21 One of the key indicators which will determine the extent of residential development that will be required to achieve the anticipated population increases is the changing nature of households. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) estimates that the average household size in 2026 in the North West of England will be 2.12 which is down from 2.3 in 2000. This is as a result of changing personal and demographic circumstances (more single young adult households, fewer children per family, levels of family breakdown and single households after death of a partner)²⁶.
- 3.22 The changing household structure and changing demographic suggests that to achieve forecast population growth in the period 2006 - 2026, Warrington will have an increase in total households of 19.75%. Household growth rates will outstrip population growth rates.
- 3.23 Looking at the household statistics and the ageing population profile (and assuming anticipated growth rates occur), it is anticipated that 46% of the total required net increase in households in 2031 will be households of 75 years and older. The figure for England as a whole is 31%.

The Labour Market

Employment and Activity

- 3.24 Overall, the majority of the indicators for Warrington in terms of the economic well-being of its residents and the labour market are ahead of those of the North West and England and are broadly aligned with those of the sub-region.
- 3.25 Between 2004 and 2009 Warrington recorded an average employment rate between 77.2% - 79.5% (October-September year). This rate was higher than both the NW region and England in every period. The rates are comparable with Cheshire and amongst the comparator locations studied, only notably lower than South Gloucestershire which has maintained an employment rate of over 80% throughout the period. In the recession of 2008/09 the employment rate in Warrington dipped to its lowest level (77.2%) but this represented a less severe fall (2.3 percentage points) than that recorded across Cheshire and the North West. The average employment rate for England in 08/09 only fell by 1.5 percentage points in the same period²⁷. The Centre for Cities report 2011 identified that Warrington had the 9th highest employment rate in the country at 75.3%.
- 3.26 Levels of economic activity, unemployment and economic inactivity record a similar story for Warrington. Against national and regional averages, the labour market in Warrington appears to work well and residents are less likely to be unemployed than in many comparator locations. In fact the average annual unemployment rate in Warrington for Oct 2008 – Sept 2009 of 5.7% was better than Cheshire, the North West and the average rate for England. Of the comparator locations of Derby, Swindon, Peterborough, N. Lincolnshire and

25 - ONS population projections 2009 3.17-3.20

26 - CLG Live Tables 2010 3.21-3.23

27 - ONS Annual Population Survey 2010 – source for 3.25-3.29

- South Gloucestershire, only South Gloucestershire has a lower rate (4.6%).
- 3.27 The employment figures for 2008/09 show that the 16-19 year olds in employment in Warrington are far more likely to be working part-time (76%) than full time. This may reflect a prevalence of working mixed with study in Warrington. For England as a whole, of those 16-19 year olds in work 64% will work part-time. It is not possible to judge whether 16-19 year old Warrington residents are choosing to work part-time or whether they cannot gain full-time employment. The strength of the statistics for the wider employment market suggests that part-time working is likely to be through choice.
- 3.28 In addition to a well performing labour market from a total activity perspective, in 2009 Warrington residents were also relatively likely to be employed as a manager / senior official or in a professional occupation. One third of Warrington residents were classified as managers or professional staff compared to 29.6% in England. Conversely, Warrington also recorded a slightly higher number of residents employed in elementary occupations (11.5%) than both for the NW region and England as a whole.
- 3.29 As might be expected, there was a skewing of occupation between areas of different affluence in Warrington. The highest proportions of managers or professional staff reside in the Appleton ward (34%) compared to Latchford (4.2%). In fact, the distribution of managers or professional staff is skewed rather than graduated across wards. A large number of wards in Warrington have a high proportion of residents employed as managers or professional staff and a small number have a very low proportion.

Commuting Patterns

- 3.30 54% of the Warrington workforce live in Warrington. Those working but not living in Warrington are most likely to commute from neighbouring Authorities and those of St. Helens (7%), Halton (5%) and Wigan (4%) were the most common. In the period 2001-2008 the proportion of the workforce travelling from Wigan halved. This statistic casts doubt on the official 'travel to work area' definition which historically combined Wigan and Warrington²⁸.
- 3.31 63% of Warrington residents work in Warrington but if they choose to work elsewhere they do not always gravitate to neighbouring Authorities. In fact 6% of Warrington residents travel to Manchester, 6% to neighbouring Halton and 4% to the city of Liverpool.
- 3.32 The commuting figures support the view that in terms of economic geography, Warrington is the most important employment centre between Manchester and Liverpool and therefore draws in commuters from resident Authorities. Despite the importance of Warrington as an employment centre, however, Manchester and Liverpool continue to provide opportunities beyond those available in Warrington. The importance of Halton is likely to continue with its significant Daresbury development adjoining the Warrington Local Authority boundary.
- 3.33 Certainly, there is no doubt that Warrington Borough's well performing labour market has a strong attraction for employment purposes. The daytime population of the Borough is 8% higher than the resident population²⁹.
- 3.34 The levels of out-commuting as a proportion of the resident population and in-commuting as a proportion of the working population are high on a comparative basis. In out-commuting terms, S. Gloucestershire measures 29% of residents compared to 22% in Warrington, but levels in Derby, Swindon, Peterborough and N. Lincolnshire are lower. When in-commuting is considered, 41% of the workplace population commutes into Warrington and this is higher than any of the comparator local authorities. It is likely that locations may have higher levels of either in or out commuting than Warrington but it is unusual for a single location to have such high levels of commuting in both directions.

28 - ONS Annual Population Survey 2008 for 3.30-3.32

29 - ONS Census 2001 for 3.33 and 3.34

Earnings

- 3.35 Resident average earnings in Warrington have increased relatively quickly during the period 2002-2010. Resident average gross weekly earnings have increased by 31.1% to £503 and the rate of increase is faster than for England as a whole and for most of the comparators of Swindon (28.2%), S.Gloucestershire (24.8%), Peterborough (17.1%) or N. Lincolnshire (17.2%). The actual gross weekly wage of £503 in 2010 is just below the average for England (£506) and compares well with other locations. (Below the average for Derby, Swindon, Cheshire East and Cheshire West & Chester, but above S.Goucestershire, Peterborough, N.Lincolnshire and the North West as a whole).³⁰
- 3.36 Until recently the workplace average gross weekly wages paid in Warrington remained below what residents may on average expect to gain in salary. The gap between what can be earned within a commute and what can be expected to be earned in Warrington has closed, and for the first time in 2010 workplace earnings (£506/wk) surpassed average resident weekly earnings (£503). Warrington also offers a higher workplace wage than the workplace wage in those locations from which most people commute to Warrington (St Helens, Halton, Wigan). This supports the view that Warrington is at the centre of the economic geography between Manchester and Liverpool, but earning opportunities in Manchester continue to out perform those available in Warrington.
- 3.37 In absolute terms workplace earnings in Warrington are above the average for England for the first time and exceed the North West average as well as many of the comparator locations. Derby has average workplace earnings of £625 per week suggesting that in-commuters to Derby gain all the best employment opportunities.
- 3.38 Over the period 2002-2008 gross disposable household income per head in Warrington & Halton grew by 26%. This was in keeping with the national average³¹.

Economic and Social Exclusion

- 3.39 The report has already set out the key finding that the employment market performs strongly and that Warrington has low levels of unemployment even when considered on a national basis.
- 3.40 Warrington also performs more strongly than the regional and national average when each of the key benefit measures is examined. A proportion of 14% of the Warrington workforce claimed benefits in February 2010 compared to 15.1% for Great Britain and 18.4% for the North West. In each case, the benefit with the highest proportion of the working age population take up was Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and incapacity benefit. In Warrington 6.4% of the workforce claimed this benefit compared to 6.7% in Great Britain and 8.8% for the NW region as a whole³².
- 3.41 There does not appear to be any strong demographic pattern behind the claiming of DWP benefits in Warrington but in terms of duration of claim, in July 2010 almost half of Warrington claimants have been submitting claims for a period of over 5 years. This is perhaps not surprising as the largest single benefit for claimants is incapacity benefit. There is a strong geographic variation in the level of benefit claimants across Warrington. In the Bewsey and Whitecross ward in February 2010 more than 27% of the working age population were claiming some form of DWP benefit compared to 5% in Hatton, Stretton and Walton. This variation is not unusual for Local Authorities. In the comparator location of Swindon, for example, the variation between lowest proportion of working age claimant per ward was 4.7% and the highest proportion was 33%.
- 3.42 When job seekers allowance (JSA) claimants are considered in more detail, Warrington appears to have fewer structural labour market problems than elsewhere. In August 2010 residents aged 18-24 made up 27% of the unemployment total compared to 28.9% for Great Britain. August typically represents a high water mark in the year for unemployment claimants as college courses and summer employment opportunities come to an end. In terms of the typical duration of claiming JSA, 15.8% of Warrington claimants had claimed for period of more than 6 months in August 2010 and this compared to 17.8% in Great Britain. For both youth claimants and length of claiming the statistics for the North West as a whole were significantly less favourable than both Warrington and Great Britain.

30 - ONS Survey of Hours and Earnings 2010 – used for 3.35 to 3.37

31 - ONS GDHI 2009

32 - ONS Claimant Count data 2010 source for paragraphs 3.40-3.43

- 3.43 The JSA claimant count distribution by ward follows the same trend as total benefit claimants. In Bewsey and Whitecross 7.1% of the working age population were claiming JSA in August 2010 and this represented the highest proportion of claimant in Warrington. The lowest claimant proportion was found in Hatton, Stretton and Walton where the claimant rate was 1%. Even in Bewsey and Whitecross, however, less than one fifth of the claimants have been claiming JSA for a period exceeding 1 year. This suggests that even in the wards within Warrington where labour market outcomes are the least positive, there remains an ability to gain employment for a large number of working age resident who are seeking work.
- 3.44 As part of the analysis into deprivation across the UK, there has been a large amount of economic and media commentary into the engagement of young people (16-18 year olds) in the labour market and the emergence of the term 'Not in Employment, Education or Training' (NEET). By their very nature these figures are difficult to capture with young people able to drop out of official statistics relatively easily. From the available data, Warrington appears to have a lower proportion of young people who could be classified as 'NEETs' than elsewhere in England and the North West although the figures are seasonal. NEET figures in Warrington peak in September (after college courses are completed and seasonal summer employment starts to diminish) at which point Warrington NEET rates tend to be higher than national and regional averages. However, by December of most years since 2005, the effectiveness of the Warrington labour market (and presumably training and education opportunities) appears to reduce the proportion of young people classified as NEETs to levels below the national and NW regional averages³³.
- 3.45 The relative effectiveness of the labour market in Warrington is also evidenced by the job vacancy rates recorded across the Borough. In June 2010 there were 2.5 JSA claimants for every job vacancy advertised in the town and this compared favourably with the NW region and Great Britain as a whole which had 4.4 and 4.7 JSA claimants per vacancy respectively³⁴.
- 3.46 A large amount of analysis has been undertaken over the last ten years on levels of deprivation across the UK. Oxford University developed a measurement system for England based on 7 indicators of deprivation (income, employment, health, education / skills, housing, living environment) and each of these indicators is built up from a variety of weighted headings. The scores for every area in England are then created using the ONS tiles of economic geography for the entire country – Lower level super output areas. The measures for 'Indices of Multiple Deprivation' (IMD) were completed in 2003 and 2007 on behalf of the Department for Communities and Local Government and have become widely regarded yardsticks for the measurement of disadvantaged communities.
- 3.47 The most commonly used measurement of the IMD is a ranking for lower level super output areas which ranks every location in England from 1 = most deprived through to 32,482 = least deprived.
- 3.48 The most deprived locations in Warrington for the different measures in which Warrington had a particularly high level of deprivation are shown in the table below³⁵:

Measure	Location	Within Ward	Rank	Within lowest %
Income	Warrington 006A	Orford	1112th	4%
Employment	Warrington 008F	Poulton North	836th	3%
Health	Warrington 017B	Fairfield & Howley	545th	2%
Education / Skills	Warrington 006A	Orford	596th	2%
Crime	Warrington 006A	Orford	437th	2%

- 3.49 In addition to these areas of deprivation, for each measure Warrington has super output areas which are ranked within the top 20% of super output areas in the country and in the case of education and skills, a super output area in Appleton Ward (LSOA Warrington 025B) Warrington which ranks in the top 3% in the country.
- 3.50 There are a number of communities in Warrington that are classified as being within the most deprived in the country, but the total number of LSOA's in this category in Warrington is less than can be found in other areas of the North West. The gap between the highest and lowest ranked lower level super output area was quantified and a comparison made with Halton, Wigan St Helens and all the former Cheshire Authorities (separate at the point of IMD completion in 2007). The findings are as follows:

33 - Connexions data, Cheshire and Warrington

34 - Job Centre Plus 2010 vacancy data

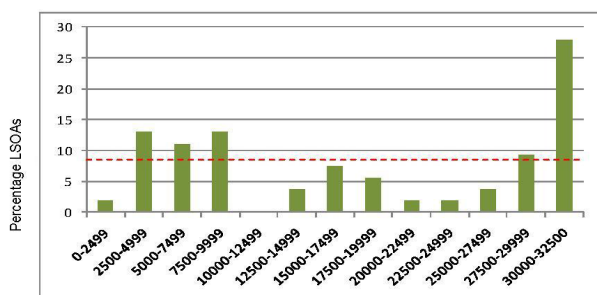
35 - DCLG IMD 2007 source for 3.48-3.52

Measure	Ranking gap in Warrington	Authorities with a greater ranking gap from comparator group (Cheshire Authorities, St. Helens, Wigan and Halton)
Income	30,931	Halton, Wigan, St. Helens, Vale Royal
Employment	30,563	Chester, Ellesmere P & N
Health	26,080	Chester, Congleton, Crewe & Nant, Ellesmere P & N, Macclesfield, Vale Royal
Education / skills	31,767	Vale Royal
Housing	29,326	Chester, Congleton, Crewe & Nant, Macclesfield, Vale Royal
Crime	31,495	-
Living environment	29,936	Halton, Crewe & Nant, Ellesmere P & N, Macclesfield

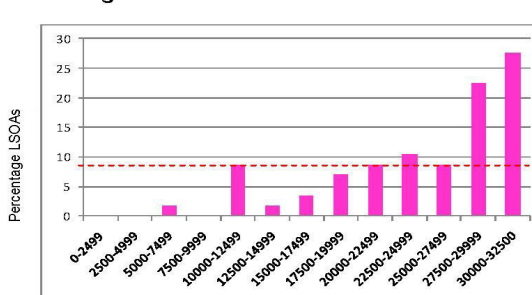
3.51 The table shows that Warrington does not have the largest gap between highest and lowest ranked LSOAs in the comparator group for most of all the measures shown. The areas of greatest **inequality** in Warrington are in education and skills and crime. In terms of crime the gap between the areas affected by the most and least deprived areas is unsurpassed in any of the other comparator locations

Graphs showing distribution of deprivation and affluence across LSOAs

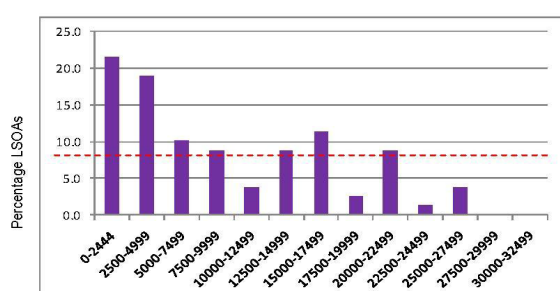
Ellesmere Port and Neston



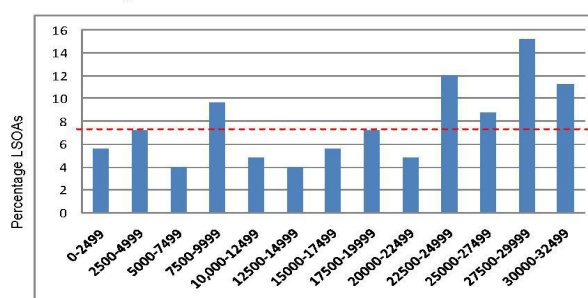
Congleton



Halton



Warrington



----- Line of perfect distribution

3.52 When looking at the overall spread of LSOA rankings however, it is clear that unlike some other comparator areas Warrington has both prosperous and deprived areas. The presence of both types of communities in Warrington has created some inequalities and the presence of more affluent areas in the town may increase the perception of disparity.

3.53 The crime statistics from the 2007 IMD suggest that some areas of Warrington may have suffered from particularly high levels of crime using the data available in 2007. In fact the crime figures for Warrington in 2010 show a mixed result. Overall crime rates (incidents per 1,000 people) in Warrington are slightly below those recorded for the UK as a whole in every type of crime recorded apart from theft from a vehicle.

These figures, however, do mask the fact that crime in Warrington has caught up with UK figures as a whole from a relatively low base in 2002. Crime increased dramatically in the period 2002-2006. For instance violence against the person grew by 236% during this period (compared to 62% in England as a whole) and then shrank by 94% in Warrington from 2006-2010 (compared to a shrinking of 18% in England as a whole). In the period 2002-2010 the changes in violence against the person; other wounding; harassment including disorder, assault, robbery and burglary from a dwelling all performed worse than the average for England. This leads to the conclusion that whilst crime rates in Warrington are slightly lower than England, the Borough has a significantly higher level of violent crime than in than in 2002. During the same period the changes in wounding, criminal damage and theft of and from a vehicle were all better than the figures for England³⁶.

Skills

- 3.54 As would be expected for a Borough with a strong labour market and a high proportion of residents involved in managerial and professional jobs, Warrington had a high proportion of residents with skills of NVQ4³⁷ and above in 2008. These figures show that Warrington has a greater proportion of residents with NVQ4 and above (30.9%) than the average for England (28.7%), the NW region (25.6%) or any of the comparator locations of Derby (26.7%), S. Gloucestershire (25.3%), Swindon (23.3%), Peterborough (18.8%) or N. Lincolnshire (20.8%). Similarly the town also has fewer people with no qualifications than all these comparator locations with the exception of S. Gloucestershire and Swindon³⁸.
- 3.55 Although Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester both have a higher percentage of residents with skills in excess of NVQ Level 4 than Warrington, the percentage of residents with no qualifications is only lower in Cheshire East.
- 3.56 The IMD for education has already demonstrated that there is a disparity between poorly and strongly performing areas within Warrington, but overall levels of achieving 5 or more A* - C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Mathematics across Warrington are higher than England and the North West region, with the area ranking 19th highest nationally in 2009. The percentage of pupils in Warrington schools achieving 2 or more A* - C grades in Science GCSE or equivalent has not only been greater than the north west or national average over the last four years, it is also increasing at a faster rate.
- 3.57 The figures for A Level achievement in 2009 in Warrington also show an average point score per pupil in excess of the average for England. Unsurprisingly schools and colleges in areas with more deprived communities or which offer more vocational courses do not perform as well as others³⁹.
- 3.58 The overall Local Authority average point score per pupil in Warrington for A / AS level (757.9) lies between the overall average for Cheshire East (724.2) and Cheshire West and Chester (765.4), although they both have higher performing schools in their areas.
- 3.59 Overall, Warrington outperforms both the English and North West Regional averages for skills and education, although comparisons against neighbouring Cheshire authorities are less clear. As set out earlier, Warrington appears to have a lower proportion of young people who are not in education, employment or training than elsewhere in England and the North West although the figures are seasonal.
- 3.60 For those who chose to study in Warrington, Higher education provision is undertaken by the University of Chester. Academic attainment at the Warrington Campus mirrors that of the University of Chester overall. The 2011 Guardian University League Table places the University comfortably above LJMU, MMU, Salford and Edge Hill, though behind the research intensive Universities of Manchester and Liverpool has 1800 students studying within Public Services (Education, Youth Work, Nursing, Social Care, Policing) or the creative industries (Advertising, Media Production, Business, Marketing and PR, Sport development). Knowledge exchange work is centred on the Creative Industries where there are partnerships with both the BBC (particularly Radio 5Live) and Warrington Wolves. Cheshire Constabulary base their degree level and postgraduate training at the Warrington Campus. Research students are largely following health based programmes.

36 - Home Office crime statistics 2002-2010

37 - The London School of Economics suggests that NVQ level 4 is equivalent to BTEC Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Higher National Diploma (HND), or City & Guilds Full Technological Certificate / Diploma

38 - ONS Annual Population Survey 2009 source for 3.54 and 3.55

39 - DCFS 2005 - 2009 used as the source for 3.57-3.59



3.61 Higher education provision in Warrington is undertaken by the University of Chester. Academic attainment at the Warrington Campus mirrors that of the University of Chester overall. The 2011 Guardian University League Table places the University comfortably above LJMU, MMU, Salford and Edge Hill, though behind the research intensive Universities of Manchester and Liverpool has 1800 students studying within Public Services (Education, Youth Work, Nursing, Social Care, Policing) or the Creative Industries (Advertising, Media Production, Business, Marketing and PR, Sport Development). Knowledge exchange work is centred on the Creative Industries where there are partnerships with both the BBC (particularly Radio 5Live) and Warrington Wolves. Cheshire Constabulary base their degree level and postgraduate training at the Warrington Campus. Research students are largely following health based programmes.

The University is a stakeholder in the Warrington Employment, Learning and Skills Partnership and contributes to the Closing the Gap agenda through its' Associate Partner arrangement with Warrington Collegiate Institute. It is a member of the Chamber of Commerce and the Warrington Business Conference.

Sustainable Economic Growth

This chapter includes information on the following:

- Land use and commercial and industrial floor space
- Housing
- Transport infrastructure
- The environment

Key Summary

- 4.1 Warrington's commercial space has changed dramatically over recent years. During the period 2005-2008, 20% of factory space was lost and the amount of warehousing space in the Borough diminished⁴⁰.
- 4.2 Between 2004 and 2008, annual housing completions within Warrington were significantly in excess of those levels achieved in preceding years. This peak in delivery reflected the strength of the Borough's residential market during a period which mirrored a nation-wide housing boom. During this period in Warrington, high build rates combined with the delivery of a number of high density apartment schemes pushed annual completion rates to levels commensurate with those previously experienced during the planned expansion of the town during its former New Town days.
- 4.3 Since 2008 annual completion rates have declined to a level more commensurate with the Development Plan annualised average requirement of 380 dwellings per annum. Current projections envisage future rates also being aligned to this level. Whilst these reduced build rates can in part be attributed to the immediate and ongoing impact of the global recession on the house building industry and housing market, it should be noted that completion rates were always predicted to fall significantly from the peak they reached in 2008. This owes to many development sites within the Borough having been frontloaded the consequence of which is a reduced supply of land going forward.
- 4.4 Housing growth and resultant population growth is likely to be an important factor in balancing the demographic mix of Warrington in the period to 2020 and beyond. In fact whether growth in housing achieves the population increase projections will also depend on factors such as household size and the type of housing provided.
- 4.5 Another important consideration in the sustainable development of Warrington is the relatively high level of car use for commuting in the Borough, both by residents and by workers. 70% of workers in Birchwood travel to work by car and 50% of people working in Birchwood travel more than 10km⁴¹.
- 4.6 Locations such as Birchwood, with its successful and regionally significant employment park, skew the proportion of employment away from the confluence of public transport provision in the town centre. This has an impact on the availability of opportunities for those in less affluent communities who are more likely to use the bus to commute. The relatively wide spatial distribution of employment sites also has a more general detrimental environmental effect.
- 4.7 The car based New Town masterplan has left a challenging legacy in terms of sustainability although development sites, new investment in bus infrastructure and very strong rail links should allow the town centre to increase its share of office employment above its current relatively low level⁴².
- 4.8 The chapter considers these issues in more detail against the headings:
- Land use and commercial and industrial floor space
 - Housing
 - Transport infrastructure
 - The environment

40 - DCLG/ONS Neighbourhood statistics 2009

41 - ONS Census 2001

42 - Level of concentration of employment analysis by ward from ONS ABI data using comparators for Warrington

Land Use and commercial and industrial floor space

- 4.9 DCLG estimates that in 2008 a total of 2.9 million square metres of commercial property space was located within Warrington. This level of commercial development represented a 5% decline on the level in 2005.
- 4.10 The largest proportion of this commercial floor space was taken up by warehousing which took up 45% of all commercial space. This statistic combined with the proportion of Warrington employees involved in distribution reinforces the importance of the sector to the local economy. The proportion of commercial space taken up by warehousing exceeds that recorded in England as a whole, in the NW region or in any of the comparator locations of North Lincolnshire, Derby, Peterborough, S. Gloucestershire or Swindon⁴³.
- 4.11 As a result of the high level of warehousing, Warrington has a lower proportion of space than comparators in other commercial uses. In line with statistics showing the low level of manufacturing employment, in 2008 Warrington had a lower level of commercial space attributed to factory uses than all the other comparator locations considered. The proportion of commercial space allocated for retail or office uses was similar to other locations.
- 4.12 Statistics for the changes in commercial and industrial floor space area are only available on a consistent basis for the period 2005-2008. Nevertheless, despite this relatively short time period, the Warrington commercial property mix has changed significantly. During the period the amount of commercial space allocated to factory use has declined by 20% and even warehousing declined by 5% apparently underlining the measurable employment shift towards service sector activities. These changes represented the fastest decline in the proportion of factory space across the comparator group (as well as for England and the NW region) and the only actual decline in warehousing space.
- 4.13 In addition to the absolute decline in warehousing and factory space between 2005-2009, retail space in Warrington increased (by 44,000m²) during the same period largely influenced by the redevelopment of Golden Square shopping centre. A small net increase (14,000m² or 3%) in the total level of office space was reported during the period. This low level of net commercial office development is somewhat surprising given the economic and property trends of the period.
- 4.14 The accuracy of the DCLG⁴⁴ figures regarding office development (DCLG housing completion data has also been found to be inaccurate for Warrington) can be questioned when the data from the Warrington Property Review⁴⁵ is considered. This review shows a steady demand for office space in Warrington at a level of at least 20,000m² per annum (lowest 2007) and generally between 25-30,000m² per annum. In an exceptional year demand can exceed 35,000m² (2001). This take up is not necessarily new office space and is not necessarily inconsistent with DCLG figures but the level of demand for office space would suggest that a total net increase of 15,000m² detailed by DCLG over a four year period is unlikely.
- 4.15 Industrial property take up has been more variable over the period. The Warrington Property Review identifies take up varying between 120,000m² in the high watermark year of 2006 to take up of just below 40,000m² in 2009 which was the year of lowest recorded take up in the period 2001-2009. In addition, 2009 was the first time in 25 years that the Warrington Property Review did not record an industrial/warehouse deal of over 10,000m². The net reduction of 94,000 m² of factory space recorded in the town⁴⁶ in the period 2005-2009 reflects the declining demand for new space and the clearance of legacy sites closer to the town centre for alternative uses including residential development.

Housing

- 4.16 Average house prices on sales in Warrington have followed national trends during the period 2000-2010. Average prices in Warrington are consistently lower than the average for England, Cheshire East and Cheshire West & Chester but consistently higher than the NW region. In 2010 the average house price in Warrington was £144,907 which represented a 10% drop on peak values recorded in January 2008. This average price was 22.8% higher than the average for the North West but represented only 87.8% of the UK average⁴⁷.

43 - DCLG / Neighbourhood statistics 2005 -2008 source for 4.9-4.12

44 - DCLG / Neighbourhood statistics 2005 -2008

45 - Warrington Property Review is completed annually by the BE Group

46 - DCLG / Neighbourhood statistics 2005 -2008

47 - Land Registry House Price Index 2000-2010

- 4.17 The Land Registry House Price index measures average prices on sale and therefore tends to undervalue housing stock as a whole because of greater rates of sale in lower value housing. Using mean house price data from DCLG, the average house price in Warrington in 2010 was estimated to be £174,250 and this represented a 13% premium over an average house in the NW region whilst only 73.1% of the national average for England⁴⁸.
- 4.18 Despite Warrington's house prices significantly trailing those in England as a whole, relative affordability has fallen. When average lower quartile housing prices are compared with average lower quartile wages the average multiple of annual income required to purchase a house rose from 3.52 times salary in 2001 to 5.72 times salary in 2009. This increase of 63% in the period outstrips the similar measure for England as a whole which grew by 49%.
- 4.19 Since 2005, in terms of housing sales volume, there has been a large level of volatility in the Warrington residential market. Increases in volumes recorded in 2006 and 2007 outstripped England as a whole but the level of decline in volumes in 2008 and 2009 also exceeded the national average. Housing sales in Warrington in 2009 were only 40% of the level that was recorded at the height of the market two years earlier.
- 4.20 Housing completions followed a similar pattern with completed units in 2009/10 only representing 35% of the total units completed in 2007/08. These figures are taken from DCLG statistics on housing completions⁴⁹ and as such are comparable with other Local Authorities collected on the same basis. It should be noted, however, that due to underlying assumptions there are large discrepancies between the DCLG statistics and the statistics collated by Warrington BC⁵⁰.
- 4.21 Using Warrington Borough Council figures completions in 2009/10 only represented 25% of the total units completed in 2007/08, although it is important to note that 2007/08 levels were very high. Warrington Borough Council still recorded relatively strong levels of completions in 2009/10 (396 units).
- 4.22 Affordable housing completions since 2004/05 have been rising year on year as a proportion of total housing development. In 2007/08, the peak year for housing completions, the proportion of affordable units reached 20% (more than double the previous 2 years) and by 2009/10, in a slow year for completions nationally, affordable unit completions represented 34% of all housing completions.
- 4.23 The level of completions and the proportion of affordable units have been influenced by the type of housing completed in Warrington 2004-2010. In tandem with the net reduction in factory space, a number of edge of town centre sites have been redeveloped for housing and apartments. This type of residential development has been typical of many urban areas within England in the period 2004-2010. The result was that in the peak year of 2007/08 the completion of apartments (923) outstripped housing by 27%. This compared to 2004/05 when housing developments were 38% ahead of apartments.
- 4.24 Future residential completions are expected to be at a level of at least 380 per annum for the plan period 2002 – 2016 (with the anticipated annual average rising to 456 units per annum in the period 2010-2017 under the former growth point status). In fact unit completions have exceeded 380 dwellings per annum in every year since 2004/05 (the earliest year examined in this report).
- 4.25 Simplistically, if the population remained constant in all the remaining housing in the Borough at the 2010 population estimate of 198,200 and new units completed were occupied at the current household density rate of 2.3, by 2020 an additional 4,408 residential units would have been completed allowing population to increase by 10,138 people. This would result in a population of 208,300 in 2010 instead of an ONS projection of 209,300. It is possible that as average household sizes decline, more housing will be required to accommodate the same sized population although this will also be impacted upon by the type of housing supplied.
- 4.26 If the growth rate in terms of housing completions is not achieved for Warrington there are consequences for the population profile in the Borough since the proportion of ageing residents in the Borough is likely to increase beyond the level that is set out in this report⁵¹.

48 - DCLG Housing data 2010 used as the source for 4.16-4.18

49 - DCLG Live tables

50 - Warrington BC Draft SHLAA 2010 also used as source in 6.20-6.23

51 - Combination of ONS population projections, household size projections and Warrington BC draft SHLAA 2010.

- 4.27 The profile of housing stock in Warrington varies considerably. Local Authority housing does not make up the majority of stock types in any area in the Borough but is most prevalent in Poplars & Hulme (39%), Latchford East (31%), Bewsey and Whitecross (29%) and Orford (22%). Social housing provision is more typically provided through RSLs in the areas containing newer residential developments such as Birchwood (23% of stock) and Poulton North (20% of stock). In the more established private housing areas of Penketh and Cuerdley and Poulton South owner occupation is in excess of 92%. The only ward where the private rented market exceeds 10% of stock is in Bewsey and Whitecross⁵².

Transport Infrastructure

Travel to work journeys

- 4.28 The New Town masterplan for Warrington envisaged a town with well developed road network linking a number of edge of town employment sites with associated residential developments. In reality, the masterplan was never completed and not all the road linkages were established. Furthermore, the emphasis placed on road transport and edge of town development runs counter to more recent UK planning policy which promotes development in more sustainable locations accessible by means other than the private car.
- 4.29 Unsurprisingly, given the masterplan for the development of the town, Warrington residents are highly dependent on car transport in order to travel to work. At the time of the 2001 Census of those travelling to work 72% did so using their car. This compared to the average for England of 60% and an average of 64% for the NW region⁵³.
- 4.30 Commuting by car is the most common form of transport for work for every ward in Warrington. In those locations where car use is lowest (Bewsey and Whitecross, Fairfield & Howley, Latchford East, Poplars and Hulme, and Orford), walking is generally the second most common method of getting to work⁵⁴. Nevertheless, the residents most likely to use the bus to travel to work also live in these less affluent wards⁵⁵.
- 4.31 The location in Warrington where workers are most likely to use their car to get to work is Birchwood. Almost 81% of journeys to work in Birchwood involve the car although travel by car is the most common mode of travel to work in every location in Warrington including the town centre.
- 4.32 Not only are Warrington residents more likely to travel to work by car than in other comparator locations, they are also prepared to travel further to get to work than the average for England, the NW Region or any of the comparator locations examined as part of this study. Almost 27% of Warrington residents travel over 20km to work. The average for the North West is 22%. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those travelling furthest to work are also the most likely to live in Warrington's more affluent locations such as Hatton, Stretton and Walton or Appleton. This compares with more than a third of residents in the more deprived areas of Bewsey and White cross travelling less than 2km.
- 4.33 In terms of working population, the employment destination to which workers tend to travel the furthest distance in Warrington is Birchwood. 50% of workers in Birchwood travel more than 10km to work. This compares to Stockton Heath where only 15% of workers travel more than 10km to work. From an environmental perspective Birchwood is therefore not the most sustainable location in transport terms. From an employment perspective and in providing the type of employment space required by the companies that Warrington has been successful in attracting, Birchwood is a very successful location not only in Warrington, but also in the sub-region. Greater Manchester has no comparable offer to Birchwood.
- 4.34 An important anecdotal finding which appears to be supported by the statistics is that in the less affluent wards where unemployment is at the highest rate, a reasonable proportion of individuals rely on walking or bus in order to travel to work. This limits the opportunity that these communities have of accessing work in the more remote employment sites in Warrington of Westbrook, Birchwood or Appleton since these destinations tend not to be served by direct bus routes from the communities most in need of employment opportunities.

52 - ONS Census 2001

53 - ONS Census 2001 source for 4.27-4.31

54 - The exception to this is Poplars and Hulme where bus use is the second most common method

55 - Residents of Great Sankey South are also likely to use the bus to travel to work (5.8% is the highest bus commute rate in Warrington).

Transport Infrastructure

- 4.35 The location of Warrington and the availability of strategic transport infrastructure has continued to contribute to the success of the Borough. A position on the important M56/M62/M6 intersections allows motorway access to all parts of the UK and also provides Warrington with a very large commuter catchment area. These road links have been the key to the growth of the Borough since New Town status was granted in 1968.
- 4.36 Warrington is also linked to Manchester and Liverpool airport by the same motorway network. Journey times to Manchester airport from Warrington are shorter than for many parts of Greater Manchester and as a result the strong growth of the airport as a hub for business has benefited the economy of the town.
- 4.37 One aspect of communication in Warrington that has not been promoted heavily is the strength of rail accessibility. Improvements to the West Coast Mainline and timetable changes have reduced the time taken to travel to London by rail to less than 2 hours. There is also direct access to most UK towns and major cities and as a result Warrington town centre can be considered better connected than almost any other in the UK.
- 4.38 Congestion within Warrington town centre and the surrounding roads is often cited as a problem. Whilst congestion is statistically no worse than many towns and cities, the road layout of the older parts of the town and the funnelling of road traffic to limited river and canal crossings as well as incidents on the motorways can cause some severe delays across the town as motorists strive to find alternative routes.

The Environment

- 4.39 The New Town masterplan has created many challenges for Warrington in terms of reducing its carbon footprint. Locations such as Birchwood, whilst making a very important contribution to the Borough's economy, also stimulate the highest level of travel to work car movements and the longest car journeys.
- 4.40 Reliable statistics concerning the environmental impact of locations are in their infancy and as a result there are few comparable statistical points which can add to the story of place.
- 4.41 Work completed by the Department for Energy and Climate Change however, estimates that the per capita CO₂ emissions from Warrington are at a similar level to those for the UK as a whole at 7.5 tonnes per person in 2008. In fact this level is higher than the average for the NW region⁵⁶.
- 4.42 Warrington has an aim to reduce per capita CO₂ emissions by 40% from 1990s levels. In the period 2005-2008 the CO₂ emissions per capita were estimated to have fallen by 6.3%. This compared to a national average reduction of 3.9% for the UK and a 4.4% reduction for the NW region during the same period.
- 4.43 The largest contributor to CO₂ emissions in Warrington in 2008 was estimated to have been industry, commercial and agriculture. At 50% of emissions this was relatively higher than the figures for the UK as a whole. This finding indicates a potential challenge for the Council to work with industries in an attempt to reduce their carbon emissions whilst maintaining economic growth. Despite the New Town masterplan placing a reliance on car transport, the proportion of emissions generated by transport within Warrington was estimated at only 19% compared to a national average for transport of 24% of emissions.
- 4.44 Management of refuse also presents a challenge in Warrington. In 2008/09, Warrington Borough Council recycled/composted approximately 40.8% of all municipal waste, which is generally 2-4 percentage points lower than the comparator locations for which figures are available of Derby, Peterborough and Swindon. Of these same comparators, Warrington had the lowest percentage of household waste which is sent for reuse, recycling or composting. With the exception of Derby, Warrington also had the highest percentage of municipal waste sent to landfill⁵⁷.
- 4.45 The management of refuse in Warrington is improving. Since 1997 the Council has increased the recycling rate from 4% to 28% and aims to achieve 55% recycling and composting of waste by 2020.

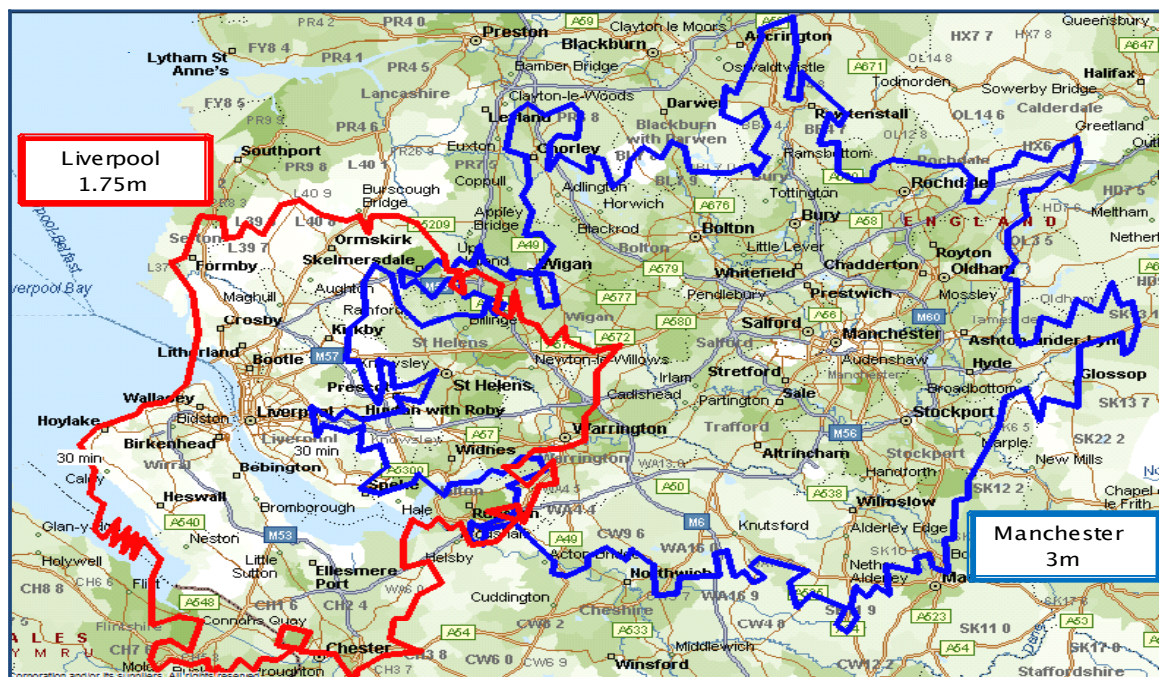
56 - DECC carbon emissions. Figures for Warrington exclude the impact of motorways and Fiddlers Ferry power station. Figures used as source for 4.39-4.41

57 - DEFRA Local Authority National Indicators

Economic Geography

- 5.1 Warrington is well located close to the arteries of the M62, M6 and M56 and at a central point between the North West's main cities of Liverpool and Manchester and close to both of those cities' airports. This proximity has led to strong outbound and inbound economic flows and a strong interdependency between Warrington's economy and the cities of Liverpool and Manchester.
- 5.2 The scale of the economies and population of the Manchester and Liverpool conurbations also create an investment shadow for Warrington. The motorway network in the region, whilst creating strong linkages for Warrington, also allow ease of travel from the central belt of the North West into the two major cities. The result is that there is no requirement to replicate a leisure or retail offer in Warrington to rival the two large cities and many companies will consider a Manchester and Liverpool base sufficient to serve the North West. Conversely, some businesses will create one base to serve the entire region and for these businesses, Warrington is a natural contender.
- 5.3 The scale and reach of the Manchester and Liverpool economies are illustrated by the map below which shows the extent of a 30 minute drive time for each city and the population catchment for each (albeit with an overlap which includes Warrington).

Map showing the 30 minute drive time areas for Manchester and Liverpool.



- 5.4 Despite the strengths of Manchester and Liverpool, Warrington has a strong economic gravity in its own right. The borough has a higher daytime population than resident population, making Warrington an important centre of employment for more than just its residents. The Borough attracts workers from the rest of the North West and to a lesser extent even from North Wales. The largest percentage of commuters to Warrington travel from St. Helens, Halton and Wigan⁵⁸. Wages for these employees are higher in Warrington than the average for their respective Boroughs⁵⁹.

58 - ONS Annual Population Survey 2009
59 - ONS Annual Survey of hours and earnings 2009

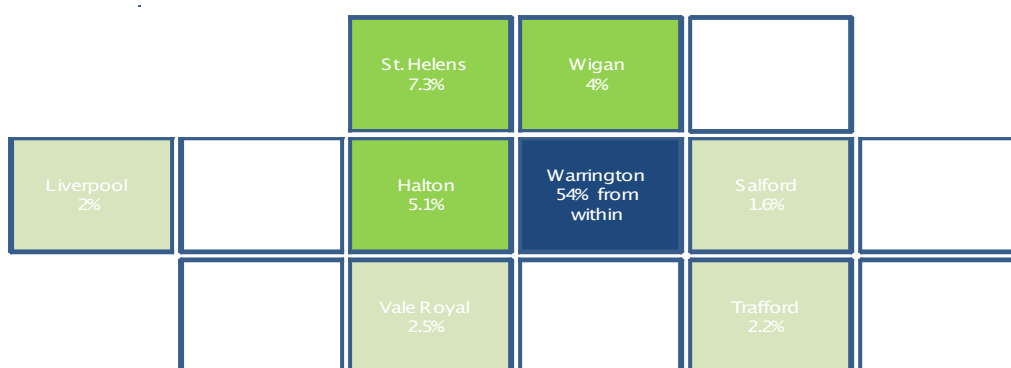
5.5 The chart below shows those authorities across the North West that have a workforce inflow and outflow. It can be seen that all the central authorities are net attractors of staff to supplement their workforce. Warrington is a particularly important labour market at the centre of the North West Economy and after Liverpool, the

Schematic showing difference in daytime population less resident population by Authority



2001 Census

Schematic showing origin of Warrington workforce.



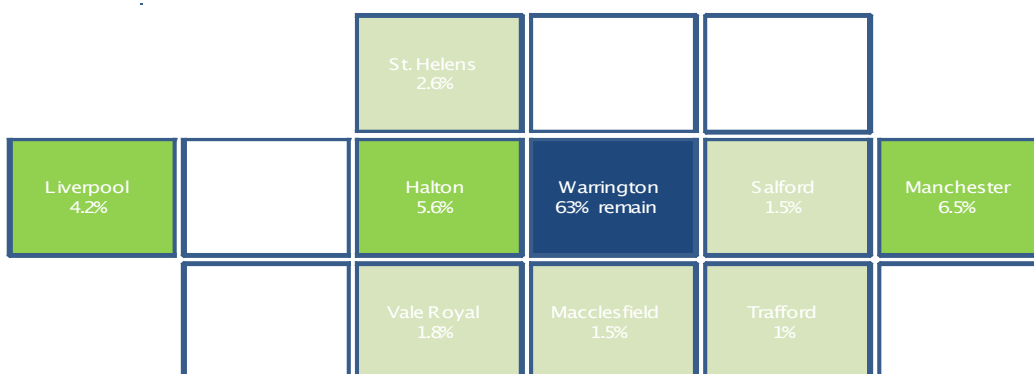
2008APS

5.6 The largest number of the employees travelling from outside Warrington commute from St Helens and their proportions have stayed stable since 2001. However, there has been a considerable decline in residents from Wigan commuting to Warrington, a change from 8% in 2001 to 4% in 2008. This is significant because the previously defined travel to work area of Warrington and Wigan now appears to be somewhat outdated.

5.7 There are also strong outbound commuter links between Warrington, Manchester and Liverpool⁶⁰. The highest percentage of Warrington residents commute to Manchester or Halton (6% in both cases) with a smaller percentage of 4% and 3% commuting to Liverpool and St Helen's respectively. At the time of the 2001 Census, out of a resident working age population of 139,054, a total of 1,638 of Warrington's residents

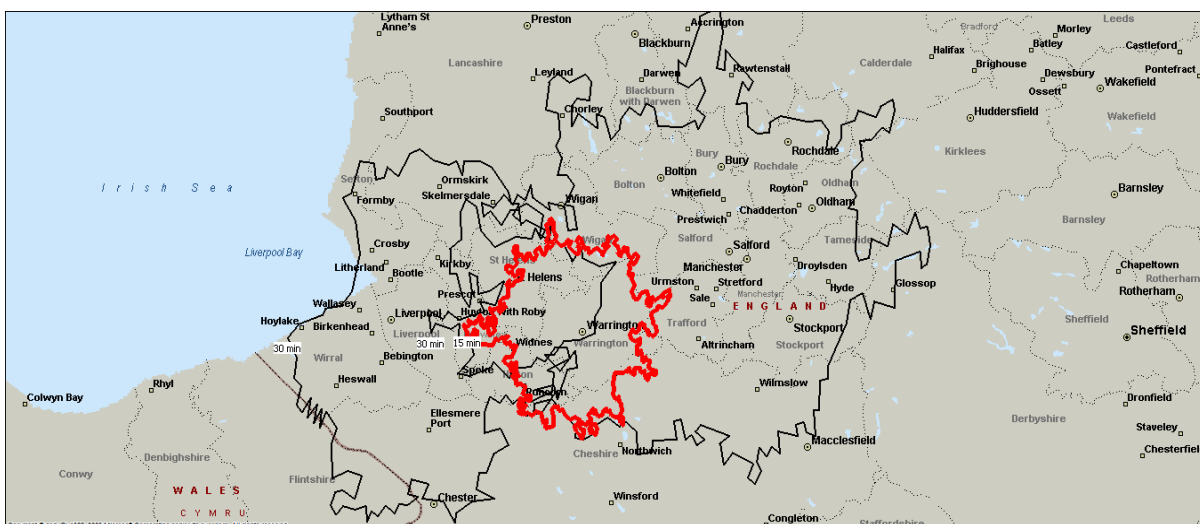
60 - ONS Census 2001 and ONS Annual Population Survey 2008

Schematic showing where Warrington Residents work.



2008APS

- 5.8 Despite the 30.63% increase between 2002 and 2009 in gross weekly earnings by workplace in Warrington, the average wage rates of residents in Warrington⁶¹ are higher than those of the workforce, no doubt reflecting the higher salaries available in Manchester and in Liverpool. In general Warrington residents are able to find work close to home but for higher paid jobs Manchester and Liverpool are important centres.
- 5.9 Although the motorway infrastructure has led to strong economic linkages, the two main railway stations, Bank Quay and Central are also significant in terms of economic geography and linkages for the town. Bank Quay provides links to Manchester to North Wales via Chester line. Central Station is on the Liverpool to Manchester line and also provides a service to Widnes. The improved service to London which makes the capital less than 2 hours away as well as direct services to most UK towns and cities presents the possibilities of wider economic linkages than neighbouring authorities and the cities of Liverpool and Manchester. These linkages are important and somewhat under-played in the current promotion of Warrington.
- 5.10 The interpretation of the labour market data and drive time areas results in an analysis which suggests that Warrington is an important economic centre for a number of neighbouring authorities. Its main area of influence is illustrated below as a 15 minute drive time area. The map is useful because it also shows that every location within the area of influence of Warrington is also within the larger influence of Manchester and Liverpool. Whilst this map is conjecture it does appear to illustrate reasonably accurately the wider findings of this report.



Appendix 1 - Consultees

commuted to Daresbury in Halton. This is illustrated in the diagram below:

Internal Consultees

Elizabeth Aldridge, Business Change Manager, Environment & Regeneration

Kate Cowey, Team Leader Planning Policy, Planning Regeneration & Development

Jane Critchley, Head of Neighbourhoods

Alan Dickin & Claire Maclaine, Transport Planning

Andy Farrell, Director, Environment & Regeneration

Garry Legg, Principal Planning Officer, Planning Policy (Housing and Delivery)

Joanne McGrath, Principal Planner, Policy, Regeneration & Development

Laura Stanley, Climate Change Officer, Transportation, Engineering and Climate Change

Tim Smith, Head of Social Regeneration & Martyn Waterson, Assistant Regeneration Officer Social Regeneration

Peter Taylor, Assistant Director, Regeneration & Development

Colin Wojtowycz, Eleanor Blackburn & Amanda Juggins, Corporate Performance Section

External Stakeholders

Peter Crompton, BE Group

Colin Daniels, Warrington Chamber of Business & Commerce

Paul Haffren, Warrington Collegiate

