

Moving Forward

Contents

Foreword	3
Executive Summary	4
Economy	8
Investment	10
Office	13
Industrial	17
Leisure	22
Retail	24
Residential	26
Looking Forward	28
Acknowledgements	30

Foreword

Our 23rd Annual Property Review has been like no previous review we have undertaken in Warrington. The coronavirus pandemic has presented acute pressure for many of our businesses and communities, but Warrington remains – as always – resilient in the face of the most testing circumstances.

We only need to look at the national economic picture to understand the scale of the challenge ahead of us, but there is much to be optimistic about in Warrington. Our town and its business culture provides an environment for business to thrive and, despite the pandemic, it is heartening to see that we have been recognised as having a particularly strong and resilient economy by Centre for Cities.

We need to ensure that we contextualise this year's Annual Property Review alongside coronavirus. The detail in this review will paint a substantially different picture to previous annual reports but, and I must stress, despite the significant changes brought about by the pandemic, we continue to show commendable resilience, and we outstrip the performance of many other towns and cities. For example, the Council took ownership of Time Square, our flagship scheme which is the new beating heart of the town centre and we are pleased to have continued to sign up new occupiers for our Time Square units.

We have also seen a strong appetite and take up of distribution space in Warrington, leading to the highest level of floorspace transacted since 2014. Clearly, we are seeing locally green shoots of continued growth

in a year of considerable business disruption and difficulty.

Whilst we can clearly demonstrate areas of relative success, we also need to reflect on the challenging realities that coronavirus has brought with it. Our leisure and traditional retail and hospitality sectors have been hit hard, for example, but I am confident that the year ahead will bring a raft of opportunities. We have broken ground on the cutting edge Warrington Youth Zone on Dallam Lane, have welcomed Gravity Active Entertainment to Time Square, and we have the Rugby League World Cup 2021, the Tour of Britain and the Neighbourhood Weekender – just a handful of marquee events in our town – to look forward to this year if the national roadmap stays on track. So I will end as I began – that despite the pandemic's challenges, we have much to be optimistic about in Warrington. We are a leading destination in the nation's economic recovery and with the resilience of our private sector and continuing Government support – with the support of Warrington & Co. – we can look forward to a swift, assured and ambitious recovery.

**Professor Steven Broomhead MBE
Chair Warrington & Co.**





Great Sankey Hub



1 Time Square

Executive Summary

2020 was a year like no other. With the Covid-19 pandemic causing a fundamental and likely lasting shift in our deeply-engrained work and lifestyles, the commercial property market had to adapt across all sectors – charting a course through nationwide lockdowns and social distancing restrictions, as well as a workforce and customer base increasingly adapting to life at home.

Whilst some figures this year do demonstrate just how significant the pandemic has been on our economic climate, there have also been many instances of notable resilience. Office floorspace take-up, for example, is at its highest level since 2014, bolstered by two significant deals which demonstrate that Warrington still remains of particular interest to nationwide occupiers. Similarly, the industrial sector recorded the third-highest number of deals within the last decade.

It is perhaps little surprise then that the 2021 Centre for Cities Annual Outlook confirms Warrington as one of the towns with “strong economies which have only been marginally affected by Covid-19.” As a result of this, the report also states that Warrington’s economy is predicted to see only a short term Covid-19 related impact, which will be of immense benefit to the town’s revival as it looks to move out of restrictions and turn over a new page in 2021.

Investment

A total of almost £2.2 billion investment spend has been reported in Warrington since 1999. However, in a year characterised by the economic uncertainty brought about by Covid-19, the investment market this year saw a significant reduction in both transactions and spend.

- » Only nine investment deals were reported in 2020. These amounted to a total disclosed investment spend of £30.46 million, across 58,716 sqm worth of property
- » Two large industrial premises were traded to Warehouse REIT as part of a wider, 18,500 sqm North West portfolio. 1 Kingsland Grange in Woolston and a unit on Milner Street, let to Selco Trade Centre, form part of the fully let portfolio, generating £1.22 million of income
- » Private clients of Deutsche Bank purchased office premises at Lingley Mere Business Park for £19.5 million. The deal for the 2,323 sqm premises represented a Net Initial Yield of 7.3 percent.

Residential

Data by Zoopla indicates that a total of 1,331 sales were completed in Warrington throughout the year, achieving an average sale price of £217,903, a 3.2 percent increase on the previous year. In addition, research by ARLA Propertymark suggests that 2020 saw the highest number of prospective buyers in the last decade:

- » Annual housing data, supplied by Warrington Borough Council, records that 559 homes were completed in 2019/20, of which 23 percent were affordable. This is an uplift of 4.3 percent on the number of completions reported last year
- » 249 completions were reported in Great Sankey & Whittle Hall, with activity across five major schemes, including three phases at Omega Zone 6
- » 76 houses have now been built on the Pewterspear Green Road / Stretton Road site in Appleton. The Barratt and David Wilson Homes scheme will eventually hold 180 houses across 7.7 ha.



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Office

Supported by two significant deals, Warrington's office market showed a commendable level of resilience throughout 2020, despite a general reduction in deals of 200 sqm and above:

- » A total of 25,225 sqm of floorspace was transacted in 2020, comprising 28 deals. Whilst the highest total achieved since 2014, deal numbers themselves were the lowest in almost a decade, as smaller occupiers were hit by uncertainty throughout an economically turbulent year
- » The year's largest deal saw Warrington Borough Council take occupation of 7,636 sqm at 1 Time Square. The move allows the capacity to house up to 800 people, with staff relocating from various locations across the Town Centre, including The Base, New Town House and Quattro
- » Communications giant BT has agreed a 10-year lease to occupy Stanford House in Birchwood. The company will move into the Council-owned building from April 2021.



Industrial

A strong appetite for large warehouse and distribution space across the North West was reflected in Warrington throughout 2020, with a strong performance leading to the highest level of floorspace transacted since 2014:

- » Take-up of 147,410 sqm of industrial floorspace was achieved in 2020, comprising 66 deals. This is also the highest deals total recorded since 2016 and the third largest in the last decade
- » Over 50,000 sqm was traded at Omega, primarily through the year's two largest deals to Gousto and Jungheinrich. The deals marked the first letting on Mountpark's Phase 2, following the completion of all space on Phase 1 last year
- » Consistent demand for space saw the average lease term sit at 5.5 years, with an average rent achieved of £69 per sqm. The year's highest rent was £86 per sqm, achieved at Penketh Business Park.



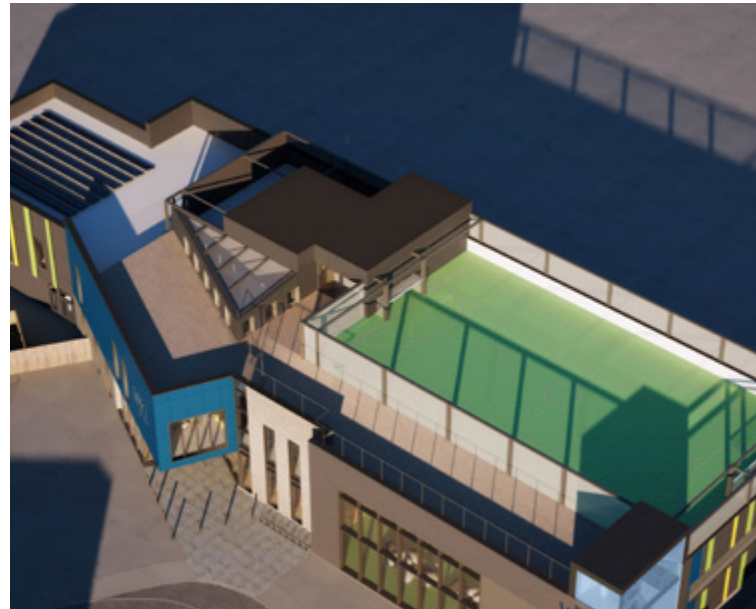
147,410 m²
transacted in 2020
in **66 deals**



Leisure

The leisure industry was hit hard by Covid-19 restrictions throughout 2020, with robust adaptation required to meet the new demands of customers adhering to increasingly isolating restrictions:

- » Construction began on the new, state-of-the-art Warrington Youth Zone on Dallam Lane. Whilst delayed by Covid-19, the centre is now set to open in 2022, offering a range of services to Warrington's young people, regardless of circumstance or background
- » Gravity Active Entertainment opened at Time Square. The brand-new leisure destination features 'wall-to-wall' trampolines, rock climbing walls and a bar/café. The 2,880 sqm premises is the company's first North West location, adding to ten other centres across the country
- » Warrington is set to host three rugby fixtures in the upcoming Rugby League World Cup. The town will host the Papua New Guinea national team and also stage a Physical Disability Rugby League event.
- » The new Bewsey and Dallam Hub is nearing completion and set to open in May 2021



Youth Zone



Warrington Market



Gravity

Retail

The Centre for Retail Research suggests that in 2020 retail spending held up well, albeit with food and wider online sales propping up what was a challenging year for the high street. The ONS also suggests that retail sales did increase in 2020, if only by 0.3 percent:

- » Following the opening of Time Square in 2019, last year finally saw the unveiling of the new-look Warrington Market, which now houses over 50 independent traders. The food and drink offering in The Cookhouse, across the open-air ground floor, along with a wealth of external seating, proved invaluable in the summer to a public adhering to social-distancing regulations
- » Wren Kitchens, one of the UK's leading kitchen retailers, has relocated from Riverside Retail Park to the former home of Mothercare at Junction Nine Retail Park. The store, secured on a 10-year lease, boasts an impressive 2,015 sqm showroom over two-storeys with 83 unique kitchens on display.

New
£6.9m
 Youth Zone

Set to open in 2022

Economy

Despite a year generally characterised by economic uncertainty amidst the Covid-19 pandemic, Warrington has proven itself resilient. This is primarily thanks to a number of positive economic stories to report from 2020, including the granting of Warrington's new Town Deal funding, which will continue to aid the town as it looks to emerge from a year of economic restrictions.

Warrington's economic performance has a history of being strongly referenced by the Centre for Cities Annual Outlook and this year is no different. The 2021 report confirms Warrington as one of the towns with "strong economies which have only been marginally affected by Covid-19." The commentary states that Warrington's economy is likely to only see a short term Covid-19 related impact, given that the initial effect was seen in local services businesses, in a relatively small capacity compared to other centres.

Perhaps unsurprisingly then, research from Capital on Tap reveals that more than 1,300 new business ventures have been launched in Warrington since the first national lockdown. 1,325 lockdown entrepreneurs have established their own ventures since March 2020, although these figures do need to be treated with caution, as Warrington has a number of businesses that host registered company addresses. The online retail sector accounts for more than five percent of businesses registered in the UK since lockdown began, with the food preparation sector accounting for a further two percent. Examples of the types of businesses in this category include street food vendors, food stalls, and delivery or take-away only restaurants.

Warrington is one of the first seven towns across the country to have a funding offer made as part of the Town Deal, a landmark £3.6 billion Government scheme. The multi-faceted aim of the scheme is effectively to 'level up' local economies – to support businesses, create jobs and invest in transport, infrastructure, and skills. Warrington's Town Investment Plan identified seven key projects for which it sought funding. These include a health and wellbeing hub and a health and social care academy in the Town Centre, an advanced construction training centre, a new bus depot, a comprehensive active travel programme, a digital enterprise hub and a remastered cultural hub at the Pyramid Arts Centre.

This level of funding will help to not only revitalise the town's offer itself, but also to help boost job numbers and footfall to the Town Centre, providing much needed assistance to the retail and hospitality sectors which have been hit hardest during a year of restrictions. Part of the plans also earmark funding to enhance underused buildings, making seemingly unloved spaces and areas more attractive for residents, businesses, and visitors to Warrington.

In the present, employees in Warrington have a number of options available to them to help with skills and training funding. 'Accelerate' is a programme offered by Cheshire & Warrington Growth Hub, designed to provide employees who live or work in Cheshire and Warrington with the opportunity to receive a fully funded or a part-funded grant to go towards the cost of skills training. There are currently over 100 courses available that would benefit each sector in Cheshire and Warrington. The Growth Hub is offering these grants as an opportunity for businesses and employees to become more resilient and competitive after a challenging year.

£22m

**Town Deal
for transport,
infrastructure, skills,
culture & wellbeing**





Great Sankey Hub

Warrington Borough Council has approved the relocation of the bus depot from Wilderspool Causeway in order to provide a new home for Warrington's Own Buses. The relocation to be undertaken by Warrington & Co directly enables the development of 300 homes and will enable the creation of up to 1,300 homes on the wider Sothern Gateway site, one of six key regeneration areas in the Town Centre masterplan. The project has received £1 million funding from the Accelerated Fund, together with funding from the £22 million Town Investment Plan as part of the national Town Deal and significant funding from the Getting Building Fund. Planning was given in 2019 following an application by Wire Regeneration and this will now ensure a development scheme which will include a commercial area fronting the south side of Bridgefoot and the River Mersey, enhanced public spaces, and a hotel.

The Centre Park Link bridge is now open, connecting Chester Road and Slutchers Lane across the River Mersey. The £19.9 million scheme is a key component of the Centre Park Link road project designed to tackle congestion to the south of the Town Centre. A number of additional

works, including cycling capacity and pedestrian crossings, are expected to be added to the completed bridge in due course. Of the total funding, £5.3 million has been contributed by Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership via the Local Growth Fund, with a further £3.7 million provided by the Government, via Homes England.

The University of Chester has announced plans to relocate from its Padgate Campus and take space in town centre in both the former Mersey Bank House building, and also Time Square. The move will bring the University's higher education directly into the Town Centre, with plans to establish a wider footprint in due course. These plans will allow students and staff easy access to public transport, as well as the new host of retail and leisure facilities brought about in Warrington across the last few years of development. It is hoped that the move will be completed by September 2022, with options currently being considered for the site on Crab Lane. Warrington Wolves, whose training facilities are currently on campus, will subsequently be looking towards a new base for 2022.



£19.9m
Centre Park Link
bridge completed

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Investment

Since the inception of the Warrington Annual Property Review in 1999, there has been a reported £2.2 billion of investment spend across all sectors in the town. However, in a year characterised by immense economic uncertainty, the investment sector saw a reduction in both transactions and a total investment spend. Investors, especially on the smaller scale, appeared to demonstrate the same uncertainty attributed to last year, with numbers down amongst the backdrop of Brexit.

Uncertainty at this level led to a reduction in the numbers of smaller lot sizes trading. As a result, only nine investment deals were reported in 2020. These transactions totalled an investment spend of £30.46 million, down to the recession-hit level recorded in 2011. It must however be mentioned that this year portfolio sales made up 44 percent of all those reported, including two out of three industrial transactions and the largest retail deal.

Investor appetite in industrial premises supported the otherwise stunted year of activity, with three deals reported, totalling £3.65 million worth of value across 14,655 sqm. This spend does not however include two deals, including the year's largest, which were part of a larger North West portfolio purchased by industrial property investors Warehouse REIT. 1 Kingsland Grange in Woolston is a 6,596 sqm warehouse currently let to plastic compounds supplier, Perrite. Additionally, the

portfolio also included a 3,902 sqm unit on Milner Street let to Selco Trade Centre. The entire 18,500 sqm portfolio is fully occupied and generating an annual rent of £1.22 million. The deal is reported to have achieved a Net Initial Yield of 6.10 percent.

Elsewhere, strong activity on Omega over the last few years has led to developers Mounpark seeking purchasers on the first phase. The developer hopes to reinvest funds into other current and pipeline developments, to include the second phase of the Omega development, which is well under way with a lease agreed on Unit 1 to Gousto. Within the office market, private clients of Deutsche Bank purchased the North West Operational Fire & Rescue Headquarters at Lingley Mere Business Park. The 2,323 sqm facility was purchased for £19.5 million and is occupied by Fire Control North West. With the current lease in place until 2033, the purchase price represents a Net Initial Yield of 7.3 percent. The retail sector also saw some activity, with four deals accounting for an additional £7.31 million investment spend. This spend however included the confidential sale of Birchwood Shopping Centre, as part of a portfolio which included the neighbouring office building, Spencer House. Elsewhere, Urban Logistics REIT purchased the 4,245 sqm retail warehouse from Xpediator for £4.8 million. This deal marked one of five acquisitions of logistics premises announced by Urban Logistics, for a total sum of £33.1 million.



£2.2 billion investment since 1999



9 investments totaling **£30.46 million**



Mounpark Omega



Time Square



The performance of this year's investment sector will come as no surprise to most. Investor appetite is always affected in large part by economic uncertainty, reducing the level of investor demand and indeed supply of opportunities coming to market. This was both demonstrated last year, amidst the resolution of Brexit, and continued to a much more significant extent this year, as Covid-19 saw activity drop towards the recession-hit level of 2011.

Nevertheless, investor activity still remains in part across all sectors in Warrington. With a positive average Net Initial Yield of 6.7 percent achieved across all reported transactions in 2020, the market showed a level of resilience that, it will be hoped, can be built upon as the country looks to shake off the restrictions that have characterised a turbulent year.

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Investment Deals Completed

Office

Property	Vendor	Purchaser	Size (m ²)	Price (£M)	Tenant	Income	Net Initial Yield (%)	Agent(s)
Fire Control North West HQ, Lingley Mere Business Park	Private Investor	Clients of Deutsche Bank	2,323	19.50	Fire Control North West	Undisclosed	7.3	Undisclosed
Spencer House, Birchwood	RDI REIT	MDSR	4,645	Portfolio Sale	Various	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	Savills

Industrial

Property	Vendor	Purchaser	Size (m ²)	Price (£)	Tenant	Income	Net Initial Yield (%)	Agent(s)
Unit 1, Kingsland Grange Woolston	Private Investor	Warehouse REIT	6,596	Portfolio Sale	Perrite	Portfolio Sale	6.10	Undisclosed
Unit 13, Taurus Park, Gemini Business Park, Gemini	Demac Properties Ltd	Bradda Capital Ltd	4,157	3.65	Falck	255,900	6.58	JLL
Warehouse Unit, Milner Street	Private Investor	Warehouse REIT	3,902	Portfolio Sale	Selco Trade Centre	Portfolio Sale	6.10	Undisclosed

Retail

Property	Vendor	Purchaser	Size (m ²)	Price (£)	Tenant	Income	Net Initial Yield (%)	Agent(s)
Birchwood Shopping Centre, Birchwood	RDI REIT	MDSR	29,999	Portfolio Sale	Various	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	Savills
Retail Warehouse, Winwick Road	Xpediator	Urban Logistics REIT	4,245	4.8	The Range	202,420	7.40	Undisclosed
Retail Unit (Former Dunhelm Mill), Parker Street	Private Investor	Parker St (MSCP) Ltd	2,150	2	Pound-stretcher	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	Undisclosed
350 and 350a Wilderspool Causeway	Better Bathrooms (UK) Ltd	City Centre Projects	699	0.51	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	Sanderson Weatherall

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Office

Despite an economic landscape ever-changing with Covid-19 restrictions, Warrington's office market showed great resilience throughout 2020. Buoyed by two significant deals throughout the year, the town saw the level of transacted floorspace at its highest since 2014.

A total of 25,225 sqm of office space was transacted throughout 2020, comprising 28 deals. Although total deal numbers were down to the lowest level in almost a decade, two headline transactions at Time Square and Stanford House in Birchwood boosted the floorspace total and demonstrated a level of consistent occupier appetite for space in Warrington.

In recent years, a strong churn of transactions has led to significant activity below the 1,000 sqm level. In fact, smaller deals of this nature accounted for 69 percent of all floorspace transacted in 2019. In 2020 however, the tables turned significantly with deals above 1,000 sqm accounting for 67 percent of all floorspace. Indeed, the two largest deals combined, both over 5,000 sqm, accounted for almost 50 percent of all office deals above 200 sqm.

Unsurprisingly then, the trend of an ever-decreasing average deal size stopped this year, instead growing from 590 sqm in 2019 to 901 sqm in 2020, as occupiers looking for

smaller space demonstrated a level of caution brought about by heightened restrictions and a need to accommodate for staff, at least in part, to work from home.

Once again Birchwood Park set the year's prime rent, with £215 per sqm achieved on the 672 sqm deal to Hoover Candy at Bridgewater Place. The second-floor premises at 301 Bridgewater Place serves as an expansion to the 1,112 sqm office the domestic appliance manufacturer took in 2018, which includes a 232 sqm showroom showcasing the company's 'Kitchen of the Future' installation. Elsewhere, rents remained robust across the town, with £188 per sqm achieved at the Quayside and Brewhouse buildings at Wilderspool Business Park, as well as at Ibis Court on Centre Park.

Twenty percent of reported deals in 2020 were freehold transactions, including the year's largest at 1 Time Square. Disclosed values varied, with the highest achieved at 5a Olympic Park, through the sale of the 391 sqm building to Churchill Retirement Living at £1,399 per sqm. The building will serve as the main hub to the company's North West operation. Elsewhere the Palmyra Street Chambers were sold to Brenrun Ltd for £1,323 per sqm on a long leasehold term and 10 Mandarin Court, a 550 sqm modern office building on Centre Park, was sold to Cauldwell Construction for £1,076 per sqm.



25,225 m²
floorspace
transacted in
2020 in 28 deals

Prime Rent

£215 per m²



Birchwood Park

Skin City, Centre Park



As highlighted in principle in last year's Review, Warrington Borough Council finally took possession of 1 Time Square in 2020 in what unsurprisingly became the year's largest deal. Post lockdown, the Council will occupy 7,636 sqm of the Grade-A, Town Centre office space, over five floors. The new location, from which staff will move from current premises including New Town House and Quattro, has space for 800 workstations. Staff from The Base, Rylands Street, Museum Street and Contact Warrington are also set to move into the new building, which has been fully optimised to offer meeting rooms, kitchen / breakout areas and a conference suite, as well as showers, changing facilities and lockers.

The year's other notable headline sees BT relocating to Stanford House in Birchwood, a two-storey building located off Birchwood Park Avenue. The communications giant has agreed to a 10-year lease from Warrington Borough Council, which purchased the building from Texton Property Fund in 2018 for £13 million. This then marks the Council's involvement in the two largest office deals of 2020. With the

move formally agreed, BT is expected to take occupation in April 2021. While Birchwood typically saw the majority of office activity above 200 sqm, other areas including Centre Park saw a significant amount of floorspace transacted. Five deals completed on the Business Park, comprising 3,141 sqm, 12 percent of the year's total. Three of these deals were of 500 sqm or more. The two largest deals on the scheme were the respective lettings of 1 and 2 Lakeside Court to the NHS and skincare accessory specialist Skincity UK. These two deals were completed at an average rent of £153 per sqm, with both companies agreeing to a 5-year lease.

Warrington's thriving business hub, The Base, also saw another successful year of lettings. Two early lettings to Sumo Digital and online marketing agency Feel Digital brought the total number of digital businesses in the building to 15, accounting for 65 percent of all occupiers. Buoyed by a 100 percent renewal rate throughout the Covid-19 pandemic so far, the building is now home to 26 companies employing 253 staff.



100% renewal rate at The Base.
 Building is now home to 26 companies employing 253 staff

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Office Deals Completed

Property Address	Vendor/Landlord	Tenant/ Purchaser	Size (m ²)	Rent/Price (£/ m ²)	Lease Term (Years)	Agent(s)
1 Time Square	Warrington Borough Council	Warrington Borough Council	7,636	Undisclosed	Freehold	Unrepresented
Stanford House, Birchwood	Warrington Borough Council	BT	5,090	Undisclosed	15	JLL
Parrs Bank, 7-11 Winwick Street	Mexion Ltd	Undisclosed	1,509	£307.96	Freehold	Read Property Associates
3rd Floor, 401 Faraday Street, Birchwood Park, Birchwood	Warrington Borough Council	Flexera Software	1,509	£169.53	10	BE Group / JLL / Cushman & Wakefield
1 Lakeside Court, Centre Park	Herbert Street Partnership	NHS	1,035	£156.08	5	BE Group / Knight Frank
2 Lakeside Court, Centre Park	Herbert Street Partnership	Skincity UK	985	£150.70	5	BE Group / Knight Frank
2nd Floor, 301 Bridgewater Place, Birchwood Park, Birchwood	Warrington Borough Council	Hoover Candy	672	£215.28	15	BE Group / JLL / Knight Frank
10 Mandarin Point, Centre Park	Peleton Properties	Caldwell Construction	550	£1,076.40	Freehold	BE Group
7 Bold Street	The Warrington Club	Winterwood Ltd	465	£645.84	Freehold	Morgan Williams
Patten House, Mersey Street	Core Property	Alt Space	437	£96.88	Undisclosed	Roberts Vain Wilshaw
First Floor, 103 Dalton Avenue, Birchwood Park, Birchwood	Warrington Borough Council	Kellen Homes	414	£180.30	5	BE Group / JLL
Ground Floor, 103 Dalton Avenue, Birchwood Park, Birchwood	Warrington Borough Council	Miller Homes	393	£180.30	5	BE Group / JLL / Knight Frank
Emsphere House, Taylor Business Park, Risley	Ribston	Airangel	391	£129.17	3	Morgan Williams / Roberts Vain Wilshaw
5a Olympic Park, Birchwood	Marshal CDP	Churchill Retirement Living	391	£1,399.00	Freehold	Roberts Vain Wilshaw / Cushman & Wakefield



1 Time Square



Hoover Candy, Birchwood Park

Property Address	Vendor/Landlord	Tenant/ Purchaser	Size (m ²)	Rent/Price (£/ m ²)	Lease Term (Years)	Agent(s)
2nd Floor, The Malt Building, Wilderspool Business Park	Bruntwood	Jellyfish	386	£177.61	5	BE Group / JLL / Knight Frank
Part 3rd Floor, The Outset, Sankey Street	Equinox	Skills For Security	306	£118.40	5	BE Group / Roberts Vain Wilshaw / B1 Real Estate
Ibis Court, Centre Park	Moorland Property Solutions	Arevon Energy	296	£188.37	10	Roberts Vain Wilshaw / Savills
Ground Floor, 230 Cygnet House, Centre Park	Keate Property & Trading Co Ltd	VUR Village Trading No. 1 Ltd	275	£136.38	5	Morgan Williams
Palmyra Square Chambers, 13-15 Springfield Street	Thorntree Investments	Brenrun Ltd	260	£1,323.97	Freehold	Morgan Williams
1a Birchwood One Business Park, Birchwood	Fideliti	CDX Security	252	£156.08	5	BE Group / Knight Frank
Suite B, Chadwick House, Birchwood Park, Birchwood	Warrington Borough Council	HP Enterprises	244	£156.08	5	BE Group / JLL / Cushman & Wakefield
VIP House, 4 Hardwick Grange, Woolston	VIP Group	DHL	244	£107.64	5	BE Group
14 Quay Business Centre, Winwick	Bauer	Tela Communications	242	£156.08	5	BE Group / Roberts Vain Wilshaw
Quayside, Wilderspool Business Park	Bruntwood	Belrock	232	£188.37	3	BE Group / JLL
The Brew House, Wilderspool Business Park	Bruntwood	RJ Accountants	223	£188.37	5	BE Group / JLL / Knight Frank
Part Ground Floor, 910 Birchwood Boulevard, Birchwood	Frankel Brow	A1 Envirosciences	216	£156.08	5	BE Group / Knight Frank
10 Webster Court, Gemini	Caldwell Construction	Alpha BioLabs	209	£129.17	3	BE Group
Rixton Old Hall, Rixton	Maher	Exemplum Print Services	200	£155.00	5	Roberts Vain Wilshaw



Centre Park



Rutherford House

Industrial

Thanks once again to a number of significant deals at Omega, Warrington's industrial market performance performed well in 2020. The appetite for large warehouse and distribution units in Warrington is also reflected across the North West, where analysis from Savills reveals that the current vacancy rate is 5.48 percent, the lowest ever recorded.

The same report last year demonstrated that supply for large warehouse premises, above 9,000 sqm, fell to around 390,000 sqm, meaning availability equating to only 1.07 years-worth of industrial supply. Even this supply is skewed somewhat towards the smaller end as, for example, there is no current representation for warehouse units above 45,000 sqm in the North West.

In Warrington, take-up was positive, with 147,410 sqm of industrial floorspace transacted, comprising 66 deals. Despite the backdrop of the pandemic, these figures represent the highest amount of floorspace transacted since 2014 and the highest number of deals since 2016. Whilst this significant increase in floorspace was no doubt assisted by activity at Omega, deals in both Winwick and Birchwood demonstrate that there is certainly a sustained demand from occupiers for space across the Town.

58 of the deals completed were done so on a leasehold basis, with the remaining 12 percent freehold sales. With demand consistent, landlords were able to achieve an average lease length of 5.5 years. Of those deals where lease terms were disclosed, only one of the year's 15 largest was completed on less than a ten-year lease, with one deal completed on a 15-year lease. Not only then is there a consistent level of demand for large industrial space, but occupiers continue to demonstrate a commitment to the Borough.

Values also remained robust, with the

average rent for the year at £69 per sqm. Across the eight freehold deals, the average value achieved was £620 per sqm. The year's highest rent was achieved at 12a Penketh Business Park, where Blears Food took a 3-year lease for the 256 sqm unit at £86 per sqm. Elsewhere, the largest freehold value of 2020 was £903 per sqm, achieved on the sale of 261 Europa Boulevard on Gemini.

Outside of the 50,000 sqm of space transacted at Omega in 2020, local industrial centres across the town also performed well. Woolston, for example, demonstrated over 27,500 sqm in take-up, with Birchwood / Risley and Winwick / Gemini equally recording take-up of over 24,000 sqm and 22,000 sqm, respectively. Certainly, the yearly churn of smaller industrial premises is to thank for this strong performance, with schemes like Rufford Court and Melford Court in Woolston and Trident Business Park and Ravenhurst Court in Birchwood leading the charge for smaller local occupiers.

The year's two largest deals, at Omega, first saw meal box delivery company Gousto take the first unit of Mountpark's Phase 2 development. The company agreed a lease for the new 28,596 sqm unit, due for completion in early 2021, with the move marking the business recording a 70 percent year-on-year revenue increase in the first quarter of 2020. Subsequently, forklift and machinery manufacturer Jungheinrich, agreed a lease on the final remaining Phase 1 unit. The letting of the 17,223 sqm warehouse now means that Mountpark has completed more than 90,000 sqm-worth of lettings on the site, with Phase 1 fully let.

27 Leacroft Road in Birchwood has been leased by Revolution Transport Services. Taking a 10-year lease on the site, it marks the company's expansion, with existing premises at Clayton Road Industrial Estate, also in Birchwood. The single-storey warehouse is owned by Homes England.



**147,410 m²
transacted in
2020 in 66 deals**

**Average Rent
£69 per m²**



Daten Avenue, Birchwood Park





Omega Business Park



Daten Avenue, Birchwood Park

Chancerygate and Hines have been given planning permission to build around 9,000 sqm of industrial and warehouse space on the final remaining 2 ha plot at Gemini8. The proposal for the site includes 18 units, between 230 sqm and 1,115 sqm in size. Phases 1 and 2 of the site already comprise occupiers including Travelodge, Harvester and Starbucks, with a further site sold to gym operator FX leisure, who opened Athelis Fitness Centre in 2019.

A prominent distribution development site at Lyncastle Road, Appleton Thorn, has been purchased by Tungsten Properties for £7.5 million. The site was previously owned by Travis Perkins which has since relocated to a larger facility at

Omega Warrington. Following the successful granting of planning permission in January 2021, Tungsten Properties plan to redevelop the site to build a new warehouse totalling 22,500 sqm including office space, 18 dock levellers and a 229-space car park.

A new low carbon HGV refuelling station, operated by CNG Fuels, has opened at Omega. The station is considered to be the largest HGV gas refuelling station in Europe and can fill up to 800 trucks a day with Bio-CNG, a low-carbon alternative to diesel. CNG Fuels claims hauliers have saved 55,000 tonnes of CO2 since the outset of Bio-CNG in 2017.



New HGV Refuelling station

largest in Europe and can refuel 800 trucks a day.

Industrial Deals Completed

Property	Vendor/ Landlord	Tenant/ Purchaser	Size (m ²)	Rent/Price (m ² /£)	Lease Term	Agent(s)
Unit 1, Phase Two, Mountpark Omega	Mountpark Properties Ltd	Gousto	28,596	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	CBRE / JLL
Unit 4, Phase One, Mountpark Omega	Mountpark Properties Ltd	Jungheinrich (UK) Ltd	17,223	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	CBRE / JLL
Winwick 185, Mill Lane, Winwick	Undisclosed	Hermes Parcelnet Ltd	17,208	Undisclosed	3	B8 Real Estate
27 Leacroft Road, Birchwood	Homes England	Revolution Transport Services	10,869	Undisclosed	10	Lambert Smith Hampton / Eddisons
Stretton Distribution Centre, Stretton	Carmel Southend Ltd	AVJON Ltd	9,754	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	B8 Real Estate
Kingsland 21, Kingsland Grange, Woolston	Canmoor	Hermes	9,754	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	B8 Real Estate
Unit 3, Phase One, Mountpark Omega	Mountpark Properties Ltd	Royal Mail Group	8,477	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	JLL / CBRE
721 Eddington Way, Birchwood Park, Birchwood	Warrington Borough Council	Maniere De Voir	4,671	83.42	10	JLL / B8 Real Estate
Unit 21, Rufford Court, Woolston	Confidential Landlord	AVDEL UK Ltd	4,199	56.51	10	JLL / B8 Real Estate
Unit 29, Kingsland Grange, Woolston	Mileway	Buddha Group Ltd	4,180	Undisclosed	10	B8 Real Estate
Unit 50, Melford Court, Woolston	Colliers CRE	Dennis Eagle Ltd	2,614	64.05	15	Roberts Vain Wilshaw
719 Eddington Way, Birchwood Park, Birchwood	Warrington Borough Council	Harris UK	2,236	83.42	10	JLL / B8 Real Estate
261 Europa Boulevard, Gemini	GJT Ltd	Ilecsys	1,910	903.10	Freehold	BE Group
718 Eddington Way, Birchwood Park, Birchwood	Warrington Borough Council	Manchester Engineering	1,699	83.42	10	JLL / B8 Real Estate
Toolbank House, Appleton Thorn Trading Estate, Appleton	Private Individual	Readypower Rail Services Ltd	1,514	Undisclosed	10	B8 Real Estate
Unit 2, Heaton Court, Birchwood	IO Investments	Decortie UK Ltd	1,454	53.82	3	B8 Real Estate
Unit 211, Europa Trade Park, Europa Boulevard, Gemini	Canmoor	Aesthetic Technologies Ltd	1,394	80.73	5	B8 Real Estate
Unit 27, Rufford Court, Hardwick Grange, Woolston	Peter Stevens Estates	Ultra Group Ltd	948	59.20	7	Roberts Vain Wilshaw / B8 Real Estate
Unit 2, Rivington Court, Hardwick Grange, Woolston	Peter Stevens Estates	EMS Ltd	703	59.20	9	Roberts Vain Wilshaw / B8 Real Estate
Unit 4a, Eagle Park	Mileway	Anytime Express Transport Ltd	697	80.73	3	B8 Real Estate
32-34 John Street	Country Electrical Wholesale	Low Energy Supermarket Ltd	674	376.74	Freehold	Morgan Williams

Property	Vendor/ Landlord	Tenant/ Purchaser	Size (m ²)	Rent/Price (m ² /£)	Lease Term	Agent(s)
Unit 3d, Trident Business Park, Birchwood	St Modwen Developments	Eagle Removals	664	43.06	5	BE Group
208b Cavendish Place, Birchwood Park, Birchwood	Warrington Borough Council	Citron Hygiene	661	80.73	10	JLL / B8 Real Estate
Lyncastle Road, Appleton	Private Individual	British Airways Pension Trustees	604	Undisclosed	Freehold	B8 Real Estate
Unit 4b, Eagle Park	Mileway	Dynamis Associates Ltd	604	80.73	5	B8 Real Estate
Unit 7, Colville Court, Winwick	Coal Pension Properties Ltd	Warrington Cash & Carry	530	64.58	10	Knight Frank
Unit 12, Colville Court, Winwick	Coal Pension Properties Ltd	Bar Code Elite	514	69.96	5	Knight Frank
Unit 17, Grosvenor Grange, Woolston	Mileway	Clarkson Evans Ltd	511	56.51	Undisclosed	B8 Real Estate
Gateway 49 Trade Park	Network Space	H4 Medical Ltd	511	80.73	Undisclosed	B8 Real Estate
Unit 8, Colville Court, Winwick	LaSalle Investment Management	KENJI (UK) Ltd	505	69.97	5	JLL
Unit 226, Europa Trade Park, Europa Boulevard, Gemini	Canmoor	Direct Online Services	502	83.42	5	B8 Real Estate
Unit 47, Melford Court, Woolston	Colliers CRE	Corroventa Ltd	492	59.20	5	Roberts Vain Wilshaw
Unit 16, Tatton Court, Kingsland Grange, Woolston	Welcome Estates	Eden Hub Ltd	451	56.51	Undisclosed	Read Property Associates
Unit 5, Guardian Street	Undisclosed	Neighbourhood Food Larder Ltd	436	54.90	5	Morgan Williams
Unit 8, Ravenhurst Court, Birchwood	Orbit Developments	Neutronics	423	57.06	5	BE Group / Roberts Vain Wilshaw
Unit 3, Grosvenor Grange, Woolston	Mileway	Kaltire	418	61.89	Undisclosed	B8 Real Estate
Prestwood Court, Risley	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	413	861.12	Freehold	Morgan Williams / Roberts Vain Wilshaw
Unit 2, Gemini Trade Park, Europa Boulevard, Gemini	Canmoor	The Chefs Patisserie Company	371	80.73	5	M7 Real Estate / B8 Real Estate
Unit E4, Trident Business Park, Birchwood	St Modwen Developments	Crossfit RepByRep	369	67.81	5	BE Group
Unit 9, Bowood Court, Winwick	Georgetown Carr Ltd	Family Martial Arts (Liverpool) Lp	364	54.90	5	BE Group
Unit 4, Colville Court, Winwick	Confidential Landlord	Eskens Tinting Solutions Ltd	357	64.58	5	JLL / Knight Frank
51 Haydock Street	Murraywood Plant Pension Scheme	Anti-Ligature Shop Ltd	353	505.91	Freehold	Morgan Williams
Unit 255, Europa Trade Park, Europa Boulevard, Gemini	Canmoor	Paysmart Carpets	351	83.42	5	B8 Real Estate

Property	Vendor/ Landlord	Tenant/ Purchaser	Size (m ²)	Rent/Price (m ² /£)	Lease Term	Agent(s)
Unit 11, Grosvenor Grange, Woolston	Mileway	Ultra Group Ltd	344	61.89	5	B8 Real Estate
Unit 21, Rufford Court, Hardwick Grange, Woolston	Peter Stevens Estates	Volker Fitzpatrick Ltd	344	67.81	5	Roberts Vain Wilshaw / B8 Real Estate
Unit 16, Rufford Court, Hardwick Grange, Woolston	Peter Stevens Estates	Cadre Components	344	66.95	3	Roberts Vain Wilshaw
Unit 242, Europa Trade Park, Europa Boulevard, Gemini	Canmoor	Diva Costumes	344	85.57	5	B8 Real Estate
Unit 15 Rivington Court, Woolston	Peter Stevens Estates	Impact Driver Performance	334	71.37	3	Roberts Vain Wilshaw / B8 Real Estate
Unit 11, Adlington Court, Risley	Rachelfield Ltd	Highways Envirotech Solutions Ltd	310	645.84	Freehold	Morgan Williams
Unit 22, Melford Court, Woolston	Knight Frank Investments	Leigh Caring Kitchen	301	61.89	3	Roberts Vain Wilshaw
Unit 5, Grosvenor Grange, Woolston	Knight Frank Investments	Hydra Clear Process Water Ltd	297	61.89	3	Roberts Vain Wilshaw / B8 Real Estate
Unit 15, Rivington Court, Woolston	Peter Stevens Estates	Impact Driver Performance Ltd	297	71.04	3	Roberts Vain Wilshaw / B8 Real Estate
Unit 16, Rivington Court, Woolston	Knight Frank Investments	Romac Engineering	285	64.05	3	Roberts Vain Wilshaw
Unit 1, Ravenhurst Court, Birchwood	Orbit Developments	Emily Victoria Candles	282	57.05	5	BE Group / Roberts Vain Wilshaw
Unit 14, Melford Court, Woolston	Knight Frank Investments	Passcomm	276	64.05	3	Roberts Vain Wilshaw
Unit 43, Burtonwood Industrial Centre, Burtonwood	Private Individual	County Sports Surfaces	261	574.80	Freehold	BE Group
Unit 12a, Penketh Business Park, Penketh	M20 Holdings Ltd	Blears Food Ltd	256	86.11	3	B8 Real Estate
3G3 Lyncastle Way, Barleycastle Industrial Estate, Appleton	TRB Investments	Undisclosed	237	75.35	5	Morgan Williams
Unit 18, Forward Works, Riverside, Bridge Lane, Woolston	Undisclosed	Undisclosed	223	69.97	3	Morgan Williams
Unit 3, Asher Court, Lyncastle Way, Barleycastle Lane, Appleton	Keate Property & Trading Company Ltd	Juzo UK Ltd	207	64.58	3	Morgan Williams
Unit B4, Trident Business Park, Birchwood	St Modwen Developments	GCR Transport	205	69.97	3	BE Group
3G6 Lyncastle Way, Barleycastle Industrial Estate, Appleton	TRB Investments	Undisclosed	200	67.28	5	Morgan Williams
Unit 1, Asher Court, Lyncastle Way, Barleycastle Lane, Appleton	Keate Property & Trading Company Ltd	Coldshield Insulation Ltd	200	67.28	3	Morgan Williams
1 Trinity Court, Birchwood	MAPP Property	Raw Strength	200	75.35	3	Roberts Vain Wilshaw
Unit 46, Burtonwood Industrial Centre, Burtonwood	Private Individual	Advanced Water Technologies	200	473.62	Freehold	BE Group

Leisure

Throughout 2020 the leisure industry was hit hard by Covid-19 related restrictions. What followed was a year of robust change, as the hospitality sector in particular was forced to adapt to the constantly shifting regulations in an attempt to find new ways in which to reach their increasingly isolated customers.

Following the opening of Time Square in 2019, the site has adapted to the changing restrictions, with the new Warrington Market opening to the public. As well as its wider retail occupiers, the food and drink offering across the open-air ground floor and external seating area gives the public the opportunity to enjoy the Town Centre's new destination whilst still adhering to the Government's lockdown regulations when applicable.

In addition, October saw the opening of Gravity Active Entertainment at Time Square. The brand-new leisure destination features 'wall-to-wall' trampolines, rock climbing walls and a bar / café. It also has capacity for fitness classes, parent / toddler events and birthday parties. The 2,880 sqm premises provides Gravity Active Entertainment with its first North West location, adding to ten other centres across the country. This follows on from the company's 2019 entry into The Times Virgin Atlantic Fast Track 100, an award which recognises the UK's fastest growing companies based on financial performance.

The end of the year also saw construction begin on Warrington Youth Zone, a brand new, state-of-the-art facility with the capacity to welcome an additional 3,000 members per year. Located on Dallam Lane beside the University Technical College, the facility will provide young people across the town with a safe and inspiring place to spend leisure time away from the pressures of home and school. It will ensure that every young person in Warrington, regardless of their circumstance or background, can access first-rate facilities alongside expert mentoring and employability programmes, levelling the playing field and tackling specific issues that might otherwise hold them back.

Although construction was delayed by the onset of Covid-19, the facility is due to open in 2022. In the meantime, Barclays has gifted Warrington Youth Club £100,000 in order to help support young people and families in Warrington affected by the pandemic. The funding is to be used with a special focus on the digital 'Youth Zone @ Home' content, whilst services have largely been delivered digitally during 2020.

A proposed 5.6 ha, £5.6 million extension of the Gulliver's World resort has been approved. The extension will consist of 79 wooden chalets, a caravan site, a camping meadow, a spa, and a woodland activity zone. There will be access to numerous nature trails from the activity zone, connecting the site to Sankey Valley Park and Woodland

**2880m²
trampoline
experience
comes to Time
Square**



**£5.6m
expansion of
Gulliver's World**



The Botanist, Time Square



Youth Zone



Gravity, Time Square

Trust land. Gulliver's estimates that the expansion would generate an additional £1.2m for the local economy each year as well as providing 220 new job opportunities.

The new Bewsey and Dallam Hub will provide a library and learning area, health facility, flexible community space, fitness suite and a hydrotherapy / learning pool to service demand for rehabilitation and to serve the needs for additional community swimming pool provision to support the wider well-being, health, social and economic change for the area which has national support from Sport England. The hub will provide an improved opportunity to promote sport, leisure, libraries and lifestyles as a medium for increasing participation and improving the health of the local community and reducing levels of obesity, smoking and alcohol consumption. It will broaden accessible services and programmes for targeted sections of the community to enable them to live more independently and ensure children and families have access to co-ordinated local services which will enable young people to reach their full potential.

The Hub is nearing completion and will be open in May 2021.

Clifford Christian Estates has applied for outline planning consent for the erection of a seven-storey, 126-bedroom hotel next to Warrington's emerging Bank Quay Hub. The proposed hotel would be situated in close proximity to Bank Quay Station, accessible from Slutchers Lane, allowing the hotel to benefit from demand brought to the area by commuters travelling to Warrington. It is anticipated that the hotel would provide 42 full-time jobs.

Looking forward to other exciting things to come, Warrington is set to host three fixtures of the Rugby League World Cup, starting in October 2021. With fixtures including New Zealand v Lebanon and Samoa v France, Warrington will also play host to the Papua New Guinea national team who have a game against the Cook Islands in November. As well hosting three games, The Halliwell Jones Stadium will also be the location of an exciting, international Physical Disability Rugby League event.

Rugby League World Cup

Warrington will host Papua New Guinea

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Retail

Unsurprisingly Covid-19 dominated discussion of the retail market in 2020, for which changing restrictions meant that companies had to deal with reduced footfall and ultimately the uncertainty and complexity of closures. Research suggests, however, that for some sectors sales soared and public demand for retail may in fact prove vital to a forecasted growth over the next couple of years.

The Centre for Retail Research (CRC) suggests that in 2020 retail spending held up well, despite lockdowns and low rates of customer footfall compared to 2019. Equally, the ONS suggests that retail sales in 2020 increased, if only by 0.3 percent. This however does not consider much nuance of the wider situation, with the growth primarily down to food sales, as supermarkets generally benefitted from the closure of hospitality.

There is no doubt that the strain put on non-food retailers in 2020 has been considerable, however when forecasting from the presumption that restrictions will start to be lifted by Easter, food sales are expected to fall slightly by 1.6 percent when hospitality starts to open in the second half of the year.

Further forecasts from CRC expect non-food sales in physical stores to increase by 15.1 percent, again presuming that these shops begin to open around Easter. Following an increase of online sales to 32.8 percent of all retail activity in May 2020, a gradual easing of restrictions, with the expected opening of physical non-food shops, is expected to reduce this number more so to the typical level expected, of around 19.1 percent.



Retail Spend Increased
0.3%

29.8%
online share of retail spend



The CRC have produced the following table to suggest how the next 12 months may look for the retail industry:

Period	Food Sales *	Non-food sales **	Online Sales	Online Share of Retail
2019	2.4	1.3	10.7	19.1
2020	5.4	(12.4)	30.2	29.8
2021	(1.6)	15.1	(9.1)	27.1

Source: Centre for Retail Research, 2021
* Both online and offline (physical stores)
** Physical stores only



Wren Kitchens, Junction 9



Cookhouse, Warrington Market



Heavenly Desserts, Time Square

Although 2020 has been a tough year for retailers of all standing, there are signs that a consistent demand for retail in its various guises will continue to keep the industry going as restrictions begin to ease throughout 2021. And there is evidence within Warrington that the town intends to be a robust part of that rebirth.

The new, state-of-the-art Warrington Market opened to the public in July 2020 at Time Square, the town's flagship mixed-use destination in the heart of the Town Centre. It is the new home of more than 50 independent traders, offering a variety of goods and services. In addition, The Cookhouse features a dozen food and drink traders offering cuisines from all around the world. With ample seating, customers can choose to eat in or takeaway. The £142 million development was delivered by Warrington Borough Council in partnership with Muse Developments. The success of the Warrington Market has been recognised by many; the market recently received the award of Market of the Year at Cheshire Life's Keep Life Local awards and has also won awards from organisations including the National Association of British Market Authorities, National Market Traders Federation, Association of Private

Market Operators, National Farmers Retail and Markets Association and the Association Town Centre Management.

Wren Kitchens, one of the UK's leading kitchen retailers, has relocated from Riverside Retail Park to the former home of Mothercare at Junction Nine Retail Park. Secured on a ten-year lease, the store boasts a 2,015 sqm showroom over two-storeys, with 83 unique kitchens on display. The new store also features two virtual reality studios where customers can bring their potential new kitchen to life as well as interact with appliances, drawers, and storage solutions.

In February, Angling Direct opened the doors to its new store at the Cockhedge Shopping Park. The 418 sqm premises is the latest addition to the 37 other angling stores nationwide and broadens the Norwich-based company's presence in the North.

B&M Bargains opened its new 21-aisle superstore in the former home of Homebase on Riverside Retail Park. Moving from its previous location in what is now Time Square, the store was refurbished in only three weeks and now employs 60 members of staff.



The Cookhouse at Time Square
 Now open offering cuisines from around the world.

Residential

According to ARLA PropertyMark, 2020 saw the highest number of prospective buyers in the last ten years, with demand for housing up by 55 percent compared to 2010. The market would typically expect to see a seasonal slowdown, but with the second lockdown reaffirming people's desire to move, and the ongoing stamp duty land tax relief, it led to the busiest December in over a decade.

The Table below details residential sales in Warrington throughout 2020. Data from Zoopla indicates that 1,331 sales completed within the last 12 months, achieving an average sale price of £217,903. Although total sale numbers were somewhat down on the previous year, this average does demonstrate a 3.2 percent increase on the average price reported on the site last year. 43 percent of all sales during this period were for semi-detached properties, at an average sale price of £194,391. Detached properties accounted for 28 percent of sales, with an increased average price of £334,882, and terraced properties accounted for 24 percent of total sales.

Warrington House Sales (Last 12 Months)

House Type	Sales	Average Sale Price (£)
Detached	369	334,882
Semi-Detached	573	194,391
Terraced	318	149,237
Flats	71	108,649
Total	1,331	-

Source: Zoopla (as of 8th February 2021)

The annual housing data, supplied by Warrington Borough Council, demonstrated that a total of 559 homes were completed in 2019/20 of which 131, or 23 percent, were affordable. The figures indicate an uplift of 4.3 percent on the number of completions reported in 2018/19 which, whilst certainly positive, is more modest than the 39 percent increase from last year.

Activity within the Omega Zone has helped boost the figures and means that once again the local area with the most activity was Great Sankey North & Whittle Hall, where 249 completions were reported across five schemes. This includes activity on three phases at Omega Zone 6 – the Miller Homes scheme, Woodville Place: and two Redrow Homes schemes, The Brook and The Oaks. The site with the largest total completions however was the Bloor Homes scheme, Lingley Green, which saw 101 houses built throughout the course of the year.

Following an extensive period of pre-development, completions on the joint Barratt and David Wilson Homes scheme in Appleton were brought into sharp focus, with 76 houses now built on the site bounded by Pewterspear Green Road and Stretton Road. As reported in 2017, the house builders were selected by Homes England to build across the 7.7 ha site which will eventually hold 180 houses, of which 54 will be affordable.

Comprising a number of smaller, Town Centre schemes, Bewsey & Whitecross saw activity across the largest number of single sites throughout the year. The most notable of these are the 24 completions on the site of the former Hawthorne Business Park on Hawthorne Street. The Council approved plans for 46 houses on the 1.0 ha site in 2017, with the £5.5 million scheme under construction by Lymm-based developer Mulbury, in partnership with Plus Dane Housing.



Warrington Housing Completions (2019/20)

Local Area	No. of Schemes	No. of Completions
Great Sankey North & Whittle Hall	5	249
Appleton	7	84
Bewsey & Whitecross	15	71
Grappenhall	5	59
Culcheth, Glazebury & Croft	12	34
Fairfield & Howley	2	18
Stockton Heath	7	13
Lymm South	3	7
Burtonwood & Winwick	5	6
Rixton & Woolston	1	5
Lymm North & Thelwall	2	4
Chapel Ford & Old Hall	1	3
Orford	2	2
Birchwood	1	2
Latchford East	1	1
Penketh & Cuedley	1	1
Total	70	559

Source: Warrington Borough Council (2021)

There has been a level of activity across the last 12 months, with further pipeline projects upcoming, to suggest that Warrington remains a progressive place in which to live.

House by Urban Splash has been appointed by Homes England to create 228 properties at the Grappenhall Woods site in Warrington, the final phase of the wider Grappenhall Heys Scheme. In addition to the homes, proposals have been made for a central copse to run through the development, providing 2,800 sqm of green space and play areas.

Anwyl Partnerships has handed over a new £11.3 million extra care development after the successful completion of the site. The 'Over 55s' scheme on Harpers Road, set out over four-storeys, includes 97 one- and two-bedroom apartments, along with a host of internal and external communal facilities including a bistro, hair salon and a community bowling green.

The construction of 617 homes at Warrington Omega South is set to go ahead, with outline plans approved. Prior consent had been given for 317 homes alongside an office development, however an additional 300 residential units have since been added in favour. In addition to housing, a mixed-use zone including retail and food and drink establishments, a hotel and an 'extra care' facility will be erected. The 20ha site is to be developed by Homes England, the landowner, in partnership with a joint venture between Miller Developments and KUC Properties.

Next to this development, national housebuilder Taylor Wimpey has been granted permission to build 180

homes at Aldon Wood. Housing will be a mix of three and four-bedroom homes of which 20 percent are set aside for three-bedroom starter homes for first time buyers.

Weaver Vale Trust is set to begin work on the development of 41 homes on the site of the former Richmond Social Club in Latchford, which closed its doors in 2019. The development will result in an affordable rental apartment complex over three-storeys. Lane End Development's social enterprise 'New Beginnings' and Weaver Vale are also launching a recruitment drive to give job opportunities to people in the local area.

The construction of 161 homes has begun in two locations across Warrington as part of a project for Incrementum Housing Development Company, a delivery vehicle set up by Warrington Borough Council to deliver housing across the town. The scheme will see 92 homes built on the site of the former Sycamore Community Primary School in Sycamore Lane, Great Sankey, and a further 69 on the site of the former Foxwood School on Chatfield Drive in Birchwood, Warrington. These are the first two schemes to be developed by Incrementum as part of its build-to-rent strategy.

Construction of the two- and three-bedroom houses and one- and two-bedroom apartments is being funded in part by Homes England to help deliver the scheme. The dwellings will be made available on a mix of tenures, including private and affordable rent. Homes will be heated through a communal ground source heat pump network and roof-mounted solar panels will provide electricity. Using these modern technologies should help to minimise

the carbon footprint of the new buildings by using renewable energy, which should also significantly reduce running costs for tenants.

Developer City Centre Projects has revealed plans to build a £15 million, nine-storey apartment block on Mersey Street. If approved, the scheme would become the tallest residential development in the whole of Warrington Borough, surpassing the 12-storey Peninsula House in Orford. Designers Falconer Chester Hall aims to deliver 80 apartments and two ground floor commercial units, as well as Warrington's first roof top garden.

Housing demand up **55%** compared to 2010



2,800m² greenspace provided by Urban Splash Homes for **228** new houses in Grappenhall



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Looking Forward

The last time we were able to meet each other at the launch of the Warrington Annual Property Review was 2019.

Since then much has happened and much has changed. The impact of Covid-19 has had an immediate and profound effect on the Borough and its growth ambitions and it will continue to have an impact on what will be developed. Much will be written about how the effects will or won't be felt for many years to come.

However, what has not changed is the ambition and capacity to deliver growth and development at scale and to meet the challenges raised by Covid-19 in concert with the other challenges faced in developing Warrington.

Many of the projects discussed in 2019 are now either complete on site, nearing completion or in the planning pipeline. It is worth pausing to take stock of what has been achieved within a relatively short period of time and use it to re-enforce confidence and optimism in pushing forward.

Of the six key development areas set out in Warrington Means Business each one has completed one or more of the major milestones in its evolution;

In the Town Centre

- » Time Square is now complete and operational and continues to attract good quality tenants. The council has a scheme in Stanley Street approved and two further schemes in pre-application.
- » Stadium Quarter has the John Street development and the Youth Zone on site and is starting to crystallise planning proposals around the surface parking sites.
- » For Southern Gateway, moving the existing Bus Depot is underway which will allow the comprehensive regeneration plans for this area to come forward.
- » Warrington & Co are also bringing forward the Bank Quay Gateway a significant residential led development with partners Homes England and Cheshire & Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
- » Within the Eastern Gateway the Academy Street apartments are on site and will soon be brought to market by Torus, and proposals for developing New Town House and Cockhedge are currently in pre-application discussions.
- » At Warrington Waterfront, the Centre Park Link road is now complete and operational. Planning permission has been granted for over 500 family homes on brownfield land at , formerly Spectra packaging, and a new hotel just off Slutchers Lane.

Further Afield

- » Omega has seen completion of units for Mountpark Logistics and work on the final unit has started. Sales at the Mountpark scheme show current investor appetite for logistics property with Omega being described as an 'ultra-prime logistics asset'.
- » Warrington Borough Council granted planning permission for an additional 300 homes on Omega at the end of 2020.



New bus depot



Housing, Centre Park

In addition to the real progress above, the council had the unexpected but very welcome endorsement of regeneration of the Town Centre in the shape of the relocation of the University of Chester to Time Square. Whilst the transition from Padgate needs care, the relocation has re-enforced the change underway in the Town Centre and has accelerated interest from both occupiers and investors.

However, 2020 also saw seismic changes in working and commuting patterns and what may be needed from residential accommodation in future. This provides a further challenge, the ability to take ideas and engage with partners to deliver what is needed by the Council is critical and the resilience shown by all over the past few months shows that The Council can continue to deliver against these challenges.

Such optimism however needs to be grounded in reality and realism in response to the pandemic needs to be factored in. Development will slow and greater consideration will be given to risk prior to development, but while this is challenging, Covid-19 has really served to re-enforce the principles embedded in the masterplan for the Borough. This is particularly so for the Town Centre as The Council seeks to change it from what it is at the moment to a fulfilment of the new town principles, capable of supporting new sustainable multi-generational communities.

To achieve this, there are three interlocking policies which sit underneath the Town Centre Masterplan, Local Plan and Local Transport Plan which illustrate what The Council really want to see in the Town Centre and around the Borough. These are:

- » Supplementary Planning Document – setting out how it wishes to see development in the Town
- » First & Last Mile Programme – how these developments will link up and be accessible to all
- » Central 6 Masterplan – how people from the Central 6 wards want to see and benefit from development.

Partners should be encouraged to consider these existing and new policies in formulating developments and investment decisions as they respond well to the challenges, new and old that we face in the Town.

The Centre for Cities confirms Warrington has a strong economy that has only marginally been affected, and should only

see a short term Covid-19 related impact. As set out in this year's Review the town continues to see demand for residential, office and logistics space and this points to great resilience within the Warrington market and strength to build on going forward.

The combination of a strong market within Warrington and a desire to make the place liveable for all in a manner that can deal with a change in use and function is felt to be an exacting demand, but one that is achievable and one that Warrington is well placed to deliver. However, the restoration of confidence on a wide basis to enable this needs help, and in addition to the steps taken locally The Council are also supported on a nationwide basis by Government initiatives that seek to boost regeneration and recovery:

- » Getting Building Fund – funding the relocation of the Bus Depot
- » Towns Deal Funding - to establish hubs within the Town that focus on health & wellbeing, digital enterprise, culture and active travel
- » Housing Pathfinders – Bank Quay Gateway and New Town House/ Cockhedge – part of the LEP's Local Industrial Strategy
- » Government funding through the LEP and Homes England for major schemes

The idea that Warrington can build back better is one that can be embraced with future schemes focussing on de-carbonisation, electrification of buses and placemaking.

To take advantage of the current position means combining high quality development with green and open public space that can be easily reached by foot and cycle in a low carbon environment with access to employment locally and regionally.

It might sound like a tall order, but the building blocks are there, and the council is working alongside its partners whilst benefitting from capital to help the process.

Everyone looks forward to the time when people can meet in person again and ask the question:

Do we need much more to Move Forward?

John Laverick
Managing Director, Warrington & Co

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BE Group has been the proud author of the Warrington Annual Property Review for 23 years.

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