Foreword

“I have great pleasure outlining our masterplan for the future of Warrington’s Town Centre. It sets out our ambitions for the place to 2040 – but also outlines immediate quick wins as well as our longer term plans.

This forms a part of our Warrington Means Business economic growth programme – a journey from New Town to Warrington New City. This masterplan will give Warrington a vibrant and colourful City Centre at the heart of our New City and a place for our residents and businesses to be proud of – a hub to our growing community”.

Cllr Terry O’Neill, Leader.

THE CITY CENTRE MASTERPLAN IS ABOUT INCLUSIVE GROWTH – ENABLING LOCAL PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN AND ENJOY THE BENEFITS GROWTH WILL BRING.
1 Introduction

Warrington is one of the most economically successful towns in the UK today. Its future is assured by its wonderful location and connectivity, the entrepreneurial character of its people and its businesses, its attractiveness to investors and its cultural offer. Warrington, through the New Town period grew from a small town of around 70,000 people to the small city it is today with a population of over 207,000 people. It is one of the largest free-standing boroughs in the North of England. This economic success has been promoted through the Town's economic development programme 'Warrington Means Business' (WMB) since its publication in 2013. WMB is currently being released in its refreshed form. WMB has been successfully delivered - this new version takes Warrington on its next journey – from New Town to ‘New City’.

A New City Centre

A New City requires a vibrant, dynamic and colourful City Centre – a heart to the place. This is what the new City Centre Masterplan aims to achieve by 2040. It will focus on clear priorities – both short-term quick wins and longer term transformational investments. It will build upon what's special about our Town Centre – particularly its cultural assets, its locational advantages, attractive architectural form, its waterfronts and its green space setting. The aspiration is to create a City Centre that's distinctive, vibrant, green and colourful – a great place to live, to work, do business and to enjoy – a real heart to our growing City.

This masterplan takes the Warrington Means Business programme to a greater level of detail to the heart of the New City – a new City Centre for the Warrington New City.

2 Achievements to Date

However, much has been achieved:

- Golden Square – one of the largest retail investments in the UK was successfully developed and is performing well.
- The key streets have been significantly enhanced and pedestrianised.
- The new Bus Interchange is operating well, together with significant improvements in Central and Bank Quay rail stations.
- The Pyramid and Parr Hall venues are providing colour and vitality to the cultural scene in the Town Centre and the Museum has a new lease of life.
- Warrington Wolves have a new stadium in the centre of the Town – reinforcing its sporting heritage.
- The Time Square development has started on site – with its new multiplex cinema, restaurants, new Market Hall, retailing, offices and major new car park.
- The Base – Warrington’s business incubator facility has been completed and is open.
- The engineering and energy focused Warrington University Technical College opened in September 2016.
- The main parks in the Town Centre – Queens Gardens, Bank Park and Victoria Park have been significantly upgraded and improved as sporting, leisure and activity spaces.
- Many entrepreneurs have started to invest in the town centre – particularly in the boutique restaurant and bar area of the Cultural Quarter.

These achievements are significant – they have provided the strong foundations for this new masterplan to build upon.

This Masterplan is not a policy document – it is a programme of work for public sector partners (Warrington BC and Warrington & Co) and a portfolio of investment and business opportunities for the private sector. This masterplan nestles within the wider economic growth programme provided by Warrington Means Business and the Warrington New City growth concept, which is a priority within the Cheshire & Warrington sub-regional growth plan. It is also central to the Northern Powerhouse – a national growth priority.
3 Reinforcing the Heart of Warrington

Figure 1. City Centre Vision

The City Centre Masterplan comprises the following structural layers:

- City Centre Parklands
- Keeping the City Centre Moving
- Development Quarters
- A City of Culture
- City Centre Living
- A New Focus for Business
- Management & Maintenance
City Centre Parklands

Warrington has a unique framework of open spaces that link (or can be linked) that form a full green necklace around the Town Centre. Sankey Valley, Orford, Victoria and Blackbear parks together with Arpley Meadows are the major elements of this circuit, however numerous smaller areas of open space make up the ring. This 'circular parkland':

- Provides a distinctive setting for the City Centre
- Provides an important leisure resource for residents and visitors to enjoy
- Provides a framework for sustainable travel – cycling and walking
- Links with the Mersey Valley green corridor and nature reserves
- Captures green routes radiating out from the City Centre and links them

City Centre Parklands - the green route linkages of this parkland circuit being reinforced to strengthen what is one of Warrington’s most unique and distinctive assets.

Figure 2. Warrington’s – Circular Parklands
5 Keeping the City Centre Moving

Enhancing Warrington’s transportation network and its connectivity are vital for the growth of the Town – to tackle congestion, to ensure that it is more resilient and to enable growth and increased activity.

A National Rail Hub at Bank Quay Station

Connectivity is one of the main reasons for Warrington’s economic success. We need to maintain this market edge or the town’s growth potential will be limited. There are some key national / regional opportunities that we should grasp:

- High Speed 2/West Coast Mainline – the high speed rail services from London to the North and Scotland – North / South
- Northern Powerhouse Rail (HS3) – the higher speed services from Liverpool to Manchester and beyond – East / West.

These routes cross in Warrington – and we will ensure that they will interconnect in the City Centre – creating a nationally significant rail hub at Warrington Bank Quay Station.

A new Rail Hub in the centre of Warrington – at the intersection of HS2 / WCML and Northern Powerhouse Rail / HS3.

A Multi-modal Freight Interchange at Port Warrington

Opportunity exists for the enhancement and development of Port Warrington and the Manchester Ship Canal as a major location for port based logistics and manufacturing, with new access arrangements and direct links between the port and the West Coast Main Line. The Warrington Waterfront development and infrastructure programme will enable this rare opportunity.

A new major port based employment area at Port Warrington with new access and direct links to the national rail network.

Figure 3. Port Warrington connections
City Centre Transport Network
As part of the City Centre masterplan delivery and the major improvements to Warrington’s transportation infrastructure, it is proposed to undertake measures that will transform the way it feels and how people use it - to create a more liveable city. Pedestrians will need dominance over the car – for example, in the boutique restaurant and bar areas of Lower Bridget Street and the Cultural Quarter. A key part of the Masterplan will be the development of a Movement Strategy to ensure that it is fully accessible by all types of transport.

A more liveable City Centre – tackling congestion, enhancing accessibility by all forms of transport and making it more pedestrian friendly.

Improvements to be made across all types of transport include:

City Centre - Highway Improvements:
The highway improvements that will have the most beneficial impact on the town centre are:

- City Centre Access Network - will create:
  - A third river crossing from Chester Road to Slutchers Lane as part of the Centre Park Link project, which will reduce congestion at Bridgefoot and release land for development.
  - A second high level ship canal crossing as part of the Warrington Western Link that will enable through traffic to avoid the town centre completely.
  - Bridgefoot Link (phases 1 and 2), which includes the Arpley Chord providing relief to Bridgefoot and opening up the land between Wilson Patten St and Centre Park for mixed use development.
  - City Centre Improvements – linked with the above three projects this package will create more space for pedestrians, better access for cyclists and buses and enhance the Town Centre highway network.

- An extension of the Bridgefoot Link along the old railway line alignment to Thelwall that will take pressure off Knutsford Rd.

- Introduction of new inner orbital highway links between the A50 and Priestly Street that will enable an alternative east-west travel route, skirting the town centre and improving access to the hospital.

- Local road improvements and corridor studies that give rise to key junction improvements.

Figure 4. City Centre Highway Network existing & proposed
Car Parking:
The supply of convenient and sufficient off street car parking will be critical as the City Centre grows and sites become developed. We intend to provide additional parking structures at key gateways into the City Centre, as integral parts of development areas. Specific proposals are:

- Stadium Quarter (phase1) – 1,000 spaces
- Time Square – 1,200 spaces
- Bank Quay – as part of the redevelopment of Bank Quay Gateway
- Southern Gateway – as part of the redevelopment of this area.
- Other key gateways such as School Brow / Cockhedge and Centre Park as part of the redevelopment of these areas.

As part of these new parking areas charging stations for electric vehicles will be incorporated. The car parks will also have significant numbers of spaces for disabled people and families.

Public Transportation:
Warrington’s growth aspirations cannot be achieved without investment in public transport and alternatives to the car. Coupled with the above highway works, a number of strategic public transportation improvements are proposed:

Rail:

- Ensure good connectivity between Warrington and proposed HS2 rail station at Manchester Airport.
- Major rebuilding of Bank Quay Station to enable it to cater for the HS2 ‘Classic Compatible’ trains, which will come into operation on the West Coast Main Line on the completion of Phase 1 of HS2 from London to Birmingham in 2026.
- Construction of a new “TransNorth Hub” Station at Warrington Bank Quay. This major new rail hub station would sit at the intersection of the proposed HS2/West Coast Mainline and TransNorth Rail (HS3) routes.
- Further improvements to Central Station – including the refurbishment of its station square and its historic ‘front door.’
- Capitalise on direct rail access to Manchester Airport from Warrington Central – due to begin with the new franchise arrangements.
- Environmental upgrades of other Warrington rail stations.
- Early electrification of the Cheshire Lines Committee line from Liverpool to Manchester via Warrington Central.
Tram Links
The Manchester Tram system is proving to be continually expanding. We propose that this system be extended to Warrington.

Bus:
Improvements to the bus network include:
- Promotion of our new state of the art real time passenger information system
- Creation of new Northern-Orbital and Town Centre bus-only connections to support faster public transport journeys to employment and key destinations such as Warrington Hospital
- Smart ticketing options being developed with Transport for the North
- Exploration of options to provide funding to enhance both the number of services and their frequency and to control fares.
Walking and Cycling:
Walking and cycling are a fundamental part of Warrington’s transportation and leisure infrastructure, as well as an essential ingredient of Warrington’s image, distinctiveness and its economic attractiveness. We will complete Warrington’s cycling and walking network on-road and off-road. The latter is particularly important using Warrington’s circular parklands. Specific improvements will include:

- Improvements to the town centre ‘Inner Circulatory’ cycle route – through its parklands
- Waterfront pedestrian/cycle boulevard
- Mersey footbridge supporting the Southern Gateway development
- Completion of our strategic cycling and walking network linking key employment areas with housing growth and ensuring the best possible connection with the City Centre.
**Freight:**

A Freight Strategy for Warrington will be developed to:

- Look to reduce freight movements in and around the City Centre, encouraging freight to use the strategic highway box and the Waterfront Western Link.
- Improve the management and routing of freight traffic which does need to access the town centre and to consider options such as a Low Emission Zone to improve air quality.
- Support the development of a tri-modal (water, rail and road) freight interchange at Port Warrington which will significantly reduce lorry mileage on both the motorway and local road networks.
The development quarters within the masterplan area are:

- Time Square & the Cultural Quarter
- Stadium Quarter
- Southern Gateway
- Bank Quay Gateway
- Eastern gateway – Town Hill & St Elphin’s Urban Village
- Waterfront East
- Waterfront West

Figure 9 illustrates these development areas:
i. **Time Square & the Cultural Quarter**
   a new major leisure development and the City’s cultural heart

This area is at the core of the regeneration of the City Centre – containing many of the town’s cultural and heritage assets, events venues and the largest current redevelopment project at Time Square.

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**Time Square**

**Time Square (Phase 1)**
The first phase of this development is currently underway and comprises:

- New Market Hall
- Multi-screen cinema
- Restaurants
- New offices
- New retail units
- New 1,200 space multi-storey car park
This vibrant development is set around a new square, which will become a major new dynamic outdoor venue at the heart of the Town with alfresco eating, outdoor markets, family play and events. It will be colourful and animated on a continual basis – both by day and in the evening. The scheme has started on site and will be complete – 2019 and is a partnership between the Council, Muse Developments and Warrington & Co.

Figure 10. Views of the Time Square Phase 1 proposal

**Times Square (Phase 2)**
Phase 2 of this scheme completes and redevelops the block south of Academy Way to Mersey Street and Bridge Street – creating a new frontage to the River Mersey. This would further enrich the mix with new homes, plus perhaps a new hotel and food store development. Phase 2 is still in an early stage of design and development.

**Cultural Quarter & Cabinet Works**
The Cultural Quarter is developing as the heart of Warrington’s cultural scene – with a range of attractive boutique restaurants and bars opening, together with Parr Hall and the Pyramid Arts Centre and venue – all set around a beautiful enhanced formal urban park – Queens Gardens.

The aim is to use development to complete the gaps in its unique and attractive built form, along with reinforcing its cultural qualities and as the location for such attractive bars and restaurants. At the same time ensuring that these uses live happily with people living in the area.

**Cabinet Works Block**
The Cabinet Works is one of the most important redevelopment areas in the Cultural Quarter. It comprises the block consisting of Bridge Street / Sankey Street / Rylands Street / Cairo Street.

It sits at the ‘join’ between Palmyra Square and Bridge Street / Time Square. As such, its redevelopment is important to the regeneration of the City Centre. However, the area has many vacant buildings, poor and outdated
premises and the Cabinet Works complex itself. The Cabinet Works building itself is in a very poor state of repair.

However, the sensitive and careful redevelopment of the block in which the Cabinet works sits is a priority – for a mix of town centre uses including new homes, business space and leisure and hospitality venues. The critical part of the redevelopment scheme will be to reinforce and create new, interesting pedestrian links between Bridge Street and Palmyra Square.

Bridge Street North (West side) has many vacant shop units and vacant upper floors. It is unlikely for shops to return to all of these vacant units – therefore it is proposed that the alteration, refurbishment and reuse of these attractive buildings would provide new homes right in the heart of the City Centre.

Warrington & Co have produced a framework masterplan for the Cultural Quarter. This is currently being updated and an implementation plan and programme is in the course of preparation.

Figure 11. Masterplan Brief - Cabinet Works, Palmyra Square and Garven Place
Cultural Quarter – Quick Wins.
Palmyra Square is a unique opportunity:

- A fine urban square with fine townscape and attractive gardens
- A relatively secluded area away from the main traffic through routes in the Town centre
- An emerging café / bar scene resulting from the investment decisions of small local entrepreneurs that should be nurtured
- A successful cultural offer provided by Parr hall and the Pyramid – that should be built upon

This activity is presently concentrated around Springfield Street. To nurture this more civilised hospitality offer it is proposed that Springfield Street be transformed into an outdoor alfresco activity area – restricting traffic and car parking and enabling street cafes. All this needs to be undertaken in a way that minimises disturbance on local residents. This project would be a Cultural Quarter ‘Quick Win’ – to be implemented in 2017.

The Council has already provided an off street area for dining and drinking in Queens Gardens – local café / bar owners are encouraged to use this facility.

As another quick win, pending the permanent redevelopment of Garven Place (see section), it the proposal that the existing former clinic site be temporarily surfaced and used as an off-street car park to serve the Cultural Quarter.
Bank Park
The Bank Park area covers not only the open space itself, but also the built up areas immediately adjoining the Park. The Council has over the last two years been remodelling and updating Bank Park – making it into one of Warrington’s premier outdoor event venues.

Both the historic layout of the park and the bowls pavilion has been reinstated together with the provision of all-weather artificial bowling greens and facilities. A new play area has been provided and the lighting and park furniture has been improved. The park is being actively used as a venue, for example for music festivals. The café in the pavilion is open and providing a destination within the park, with its alfresco facilities and deck chairs for people to enjoy on fine days.

The offices of Golden Gates Housing Trust (part of the Torus Group) – Bank Park House, have been completed and are occupied.

Garven Place
The redevelopment of the Legh Street Baths site into the Bath Street Health & Wellbeing Centre means that Garven Place is available for redevelopment. Surrounded by attractive heritage and Listed Buildings, the Garven Place site comprises the former clinic site and the adjoining public car park (both of which are Council owned). The Listed Bank House (now vacant) will also be incorporated into the development area (albeit retained and refurbished). This site will be redeveloped as a small mews of new town-houses. The axial route from the Legh Street entrance of Golden Square to the Town Hall / Bank Park will also be retained and enhanced. A public car park will be re-provided as part of the scheme.

Golden Square
Golden Square is a successful and attractive shopping destination and a valuable town centre partner. The owners and operators of Golden Square will be supported and encouraged to further develop and enhance the centre’s offer – particularly hospitality in the Old market Place.
ii. **Stadium Quarter**  
a central business district and new homes at Central Station

This is a large mixed use Town Centre redevelopment area focused on Warrington’s transport hub (the Bus Interchange and Central Station) and set around the home of Warrington Wolves Rugby League Club. Phase 1 of the Stadium Quarter is already underway with the successful completion of ‘The Base’, Warrington & Co’s business incubator and Warrington’s engineering based University Technical College.

The remainder of phase 1 of the Stadium Quarter (bounded by Winwick Rd, Dallam Lane / Tanners Lane / the Rail Line) will be a new Central Business District. Located in the heart of Warrington, it will benefit from excellent connectivity by all types of transport with Central Rail Station (with its direct links to Manchester and Liverpool and beyond and more locally with links to Warrington West Station (Omega / Lingley Mere / Chapelford)) and Birchwood Station (Birchwood EZ). The modern Bus Interchange providing direct bus services from the whole of Warrington and nearby surrounding areas and Golden Square Shopping Centre with its large car park – will all combine to make this area hugely attractive to businesses. This is enhanced further by Warrington Bank Quay Station with inter-city connections to London, Birmingham and Scotland, being only 10-15 minutes-walk away.

The development of further phases of the Stadium Quarter will comprise:

- Major improvements to Central Rail Station – with its reorientation to its former entrance and the provision of an attractive ‘Station Square’ to enhance its setting.
- A new Multi-storey car park – to serve the rail station, Stadium Quarter and the City Centre generally.
- The redevelopment of vacant and underused sites and buildings:
  - Silver Street – creating a gateway into the City Centre and the Stadium Quarter redevelopment area.
  - Dallam Lane (North) - the area around the Central Trading Estate and Asda depot – a new residential area.
  - Pinners Brow / John Street – a new residential / commercial area.
  - Lythgoes Lane – a new frontage onto this key route into the Town.
  - A new highway connection between Winwick Road and Bewsey Road – with aspirations for an extension to Priestley Street to the west and the A50 Orford Rd to the east. This new inner orbital link would enable an alternative east-west travel route that the skirts the town centre and improves access to the hospital.
The redevelopment of the above sites would create a new northern gateway into the City Centre and create a new vibrant and colourful mixed-use area and business district for people to live and work – in the heart of the New City on a key transportation hub – central to the Northern Powerhouse.

Figure 13. Stadium Quarter – Masterplan Brief

iii. Southern Gateway
riverfront businesses and a new homes along Wilderspool Causeway

The Southern Gateway development area sits astride the River Mersey and along Wilderspool Causeway. The proposal is to create:

- A new town centre waterfront residential area at the Wharf.
- A new riverfront commercial area fronting onto the south side of Bridgefoot.
- A new residential community alongside Wilderspool Causeway to Loushers Lane – linking Warrington Town Centre to Stockton Heath.
The Council and Langtree Group have formed a joint venture company, ‘Wire Regeneration’, to progress the development of the Southern Gateway. To date a draft masterplan has been produced and Wire Regeneration is progressing its redevelopment and investment plans. The key output is to deliver over 1,300 new homes in the Southern Gateway – right in the heart of the Town Centre, together with a transformed river front overlooked by new and attractive commercial floorspace.

The brief for this area is:

- To create a new square as an enhanced setting for St. James’ Church, bounded by a mix of buildings – offices, hotel, homes and ancillary retailing.
- To provide a cluster of landmark buildings fronting onto the River Mersey and Bridgefoot – at Old Street, Bridge Street and the former Mr Smith’s site.
- To provide a major new area of waterfront open space improving the setting of the cenotaph and creating a riverside walkway/cycleway.
- The enhancement of the Wilderspool Causeway viaduct as an important gateway onto the Town Centre – and in the long term its complete removal and replacement with a ground level highway system.
- A residential community comprising town houses and traditional terraced streets – within a formal network of streets and spaces linking into the adjoining residential streets.
- The development of gaps sites fronting onto Knutsford Road to compliment the improvements in this area resulting from the flood defence works.
- The removal of the adjacent rail line – and its replacement with a more sustainable green route for cycling, walking with the potential for public transport use.

**Southern Gateway – Masterplan Brief**

![Figure 14. Southern Gateway – Wilderspool](image)
Figure 15. Southern Gateway – Masterplan Brief

Figure 16. Southern Gateway – Riverside and The Wharf

Ideas - Riverfront promenades, art, bridges and homes
iv. **Bank Quay Gateway**

a new national rail hub, new homes and jobs

The major national High Speed rail improvements programmed (HS2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail (HS3)) provide a whole new opportunity for central Warrington – particularly the rail station itself together with the area from the existing station to the Sankey Way roundabout. This rather underused and unappealing area could be transformed into a major redevelopment area – a mixed use new entrance to the Town Centre focused on a major regionally important rail hub – the intersection of HS2/West Coast Mainline and Northern Powerhouse Rail (HS3).

![Bank Quay Gateway](image1)

This development area comprises:

- A substantially improved and expanded rail station at Bank Quay – with its main entrance being off the Liverpool Road bridge providing direct access to the Town Centre
- The retention of the existing access to ensure the station is accessible from Wilson Patten Place and Centre Park
- New access points to the west of the station which would also allow pedestrians to walk from the Waterfront to the Town Centre
- A new rail hub orientated redevelopment – comprising hotel, retailing, office floor space all focused on a new Bank Quay station.
- A Town Centre new gateway redevelopment zone covering the area between Froghall Lane, Sankey Way and the West Coast Mainline with a new enhanced setting to the Sacred Heart Church.

![Figure 17. Bank Quay Gateway – Masterplan Brief](image2)
The chemical works in this area provide a poor image and setting for Warrington’s new City Centre and in the longer term we should expect this area to be available for redevelopment. However, their buildings fronting onto Liverpool Road are an important part of Warrington’s industrial heritage and should be retained and reused. A mixed use commercial and residential area with waterfront and major rail hub setting is a real opportunity here.

v. Eastern Gateway

City centre living - Town Hill and St Elphin’s Urban Village

The arc of the Town Centre between Horsemarket Street / Town Hill, School Brow and St Elphin’s Church is a major opportunity to create a large new residential quarter in the heart of the New City. The area currently comprises underused land, struggling retail areas and a fractured urban form which detracts both from the Town Centre and the glorious St Elphin’s Conservation Area. This should be an attractive urban village anchored by St Elphin’s and St Mary’s churches rather than one that is dominated by surface car parking, retail sheds and vacant lots. The redevelopment of this area as a predominantly residential area would provide 1000 new homes in the heart of Warrington – a community that would fuel sustainable footfall in the Town Centre streets.
Its components would be:

- A high density residential development – town houses and apartments – set as a formal network of streets and squares.
- A strong pedestrian / cyclist movement route / spine running through the area from Horsemarket Street / Town Hill to St Elphin’s Church – a new Cockhedge Lane
- St Elphin’s Church Conservation Area to form the heart of this new ‘urban village’
- The density of development increasing from St Elphin’s in the East (lower density) to Town Hill where the density becomes more ‘town centre’ in scale and form.
- Strong urban frontages to all the key streets and the retention / mending of the areas historic street pattern
- Strong pedestrian crossings over Scotland Road, Fennel Street / Brick Street and Church Street and the transformation of these streets from barren strips to urban boulevards – with street tree planting and enhancement and strong frontage redevelopments.
- The remodelling of Town Hill and the sites adjoining, as key blocks of redevelopment – the link between this new residential community and the heart of the Town Centre.

### vi. Warrington Waterfront

**West - Arpley Meadows, East - Centre Park and Wilson Patten Place**

Warrington’s Waterfront is to be developed as an exciting new place to live, work, do business and visit right in the heart of Warrington astride the West Coast Main-line and Bank Quay rail Station and the Manchester Ship Canal – one of the busiest waterways in the UK. The investment into the Liverpool 2 Superport means that Port Warrington represents a real opportunity to become a significant logistics and manufacturing location.

Warrington Waterfront has for some time been identified as a strategic development opportunity to cater from Warrington’s housing and employment growth needs into the future. It has always been constrained by a lack of access infrastructure together with the fact that the Arpley landfill site was operational. The Council, Warrington & Co and the Homes and Communities Agency have been successfully working closely with Government to enable this essential infrastructure provision. This is now programmed:
- Warrington Waterfront Centre Park Link – 2017/18
- Warrington Waterfront Western Link – 2019-21
- Bridgefoot Link – still to be programmed.

The Council has also developed a new masterplan for the development of Warrington Waterfront – figures 19 and 20, which also outlines the routes of these new infrastructure links. These three new links will:

- Open up new land for development
- Add to Warrington’s highway network resilience
- Provide an additional high-level fixed bridge over the Manchester Ship Canal – thereby helping to overcome congestion and traffic disturbance due to bridge swings
- Tackle congestion at Bridgefoot – enabling this area to be enhanced and better used as waterfront space

Enhance the capacity of the wider town centre for additional growth and investment

This infrastructure package is being funded through the C&W Growth Deal 2014 (Warrington Growth Pilot), Local Growth Fund, contribution from the development areas enabled, the private sector and the Council.

Couple this with the Arpley Landfill site being decommissioned in Autumn 2017 and then fully reclaimed, the time is now right for Warrington Waterfront. The following key development areas are proposed:

- **Waterfront East - Centre Park and Wilson Patten Street:**
  - The redevelopment of the former Spectra Packaging site and adjacent land for residential purposes (400 units).
  - The redevelopment of land between Wilson Patten Street and Centre Park for a mix of City Centre uses, including – homes, offices, restaurants and hotels to front onto the riverfront, Wilson Patten Street and Bank Quay rail station.

- **Waterfront West – Arpley Meadows and Forrest Way** – a mixed use redevelopment area – for new homes and business space (2,000 new homes).

- **Port Warrington** – the major expansion of Port Warrington for large scale port based logistics and manufacturing (1m sqft), which will be able to provide a tri-modal (rail, water and road) facility and remove a substantial number of heavy goods vehicles from both the local road and motorway networks via a direct rail connection from the Manchester Ship Canal to the West Coast Main Line – the alignment of which has already been secured.

- **New Country Park** - the reclamation and improvement of the Arpley and Gatewarth Landfill sites into a new Country Park which will provide valuable recreation space and will feed directly into sustainable transport links such as the Trans-Pennine Trail.

- **Old Liverpool Road** – the regeneration of Old Liverpool Road, enhancing the environment and redevelopment of vacant and underused sites. Detailed proposals will be worked up with local residents.
Waterfront Development Masterplan

Figure 19. Warrington Waterfront (East & West) – Development Masterplan

Figure 20. Warrington Waterfront – urban form and landscape
A New Riverside Plaza
The development of Waterfront East, the Southern Gateway and Time Square come together at the Warrington Old Bridge and adjacent park. It is proposed that at this point a major new city centre waterfront plaza be created to provide a new civic space for Warrington residents to enjoy, to form the context for new riverfront commercial uses, new buildings and form a new improved setting to the town's cenotaph. The new road infrastructure provided as part of the waterfront development area will enable significant improvements and simplification of the highways in this waterfront space, along with public realm gains. This could include the removal of the Wilderspool viaduct with a simpler surface level road system.
Upper Mersey Valley Forest Park
It is proposed to create a new and improved leisure and open space destination for the residents of Warrington to enjoy. This will involve the creation of a major country park at the former Gatewarth and Arpley Landfill sites – a large area rich in wildlife and biodiversity with the River Mersey flowing through. The country park will stretch from the heart of the Town Centre out to the Fiddlers Ferry Marina area.

Warrington Transporter Bridge
The Transporter Bridge is a Scheduled Ancient Monument and an important heritage asset. The renovation and improved setting for the bridge will be part of the Warrington Waterfront development.

Figure 23. Warrington Waterfront West – Crossings, Development & Design Studies

Figure 24. Waterfront West – gardens
Figure 25. Waterfront West – new country park
A City of Culture

Warrington delivers a wide and varied cultural programme from grass roots community organisations, village and town festivals through to award winning venues and a strong contemporary arts offer. The Town Centre has a wealth of culture – from its Museum and the Pyramid and Parr Hall to its outdoor park venues and sports stadia. Its community based culture is strong and its talent is growing. Warrington sporting prowess is part of the town’s make-up. The whole of the Town Centre’s paving and street works and its ‘Guardians’ were designed and delivered as a single art installation. Warrington’s flood defences were also designed as public art. Warrington’s events and festivals are second to none.

The Cultural partnership grows from strength to strength and Warrington’s culture and distinctiveness will form an integral part of the development of our City Centre.

City Centre Public Realm Framework

The key streets in the Town Centre have already been successfully pedestrianised and enhanced to a high quality. The council has extended environmental improvements to some of the adjoining streets – Lower Bridge Street and the Cultural Quarter. It is proposed to extend the enhancement of the public realm still further in parallel with the regeneration and development of the Town Centre. Figure 28 illustrates the proposed treatment – using a variety of solutions – extended footways, shared surface streets, time-limited access and pedestrianised spaces.

The Council published a Public realm Framework for the Town Centre in 2009. This outlined a strategy for the improvement and maintenance of public spaces and streets. It also outlined street design principles, surfacing materials, street furniture and lighting. This framework will be used to guide the enhancement of Town centre enhancement schemes.

Two new significant urban spaces are proposed:

- Time Square
- Riverfront Plaza
**Treatment of City Core Streets**

The proposed treatment of core streets will be:

- **Pedestrianised Routes** – streets that are predominantly pedestrianised with very limited vehicular access (perhaps time limited for loading and unloading). These streets will be Warrington’s activity areas for street markets, fairs etc. for example Bridge Street.

- **Enhanced Shared routes** – these streets will be shared between pedestrians and vehicles, with a clear emphasis towards maximising the space for pedestrians and minimising the space for vehicles. These streets will be used for street cafes etc. for example Springfield Street, streets around Palmyra Square and Lower Bridge Street.

- **Enhanced City Streets** – streets that will be enhanced environmentally. They will still retain their vehicular role, however they will be improved by street tree planting, paving, parking bays, new street furniture. The extensive use of street tree planting (where practical) with help transform the image and feel of the City centre. For example – the wide Scotland Road will be transformed into a tree lined urban boulevard with enhanced public realm as part of the redevelopment of Town Hill, Cockhedge and the routes between Bank Quay rail station and the Cultural Quarter will be enhanced. As part of the re-engineering of traffic in Winmarleigh Street, this route will be enhanced as a grand avenue linking the Golden Gates and Centre Park.

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**Figure 2. New Riverfront Plaza**  
**Figure 7. New Time Square**  

**Figure 8. City Core Streets – treatment.**
Animating the Streets and Spaces
The council and its development and investor partners are committed to creating new public spaces and improving existing ones in our Town Centre. The Warrington Town Centre Management Partnership will lead on their animation. The focus will be:

- **Alfresco eating and dining in our key streets and spaces** – Time Square and the Old Market Square will lead here with outdoor space for the market cafes and the proposed family. Restrictions and requirements will be streamlined and reduced to enable this to happen more easily and quickly.
- **Street entertainment** – this can create more colour and activity but it can also provide an easy venue for up and coming talent
- **Street Markets** – street markets are already a feature of the Town Centre with farmers markets and Christmas Markets. It is proposed to make Warrington a city of markets – with regular outdoor markets with vibrant stalls and pavilions; throughout the year – food, vintage, books, flowers etc.
- **Events and festivals** – Warrington already has excellent festivals and some attractive outdoor venues – Queens Gardens and Bank Park. Time Square and Riverside Plaza will create two new wonderful venues. We will ensure that there is a partnership programme of events and festivals throughout the year to use these venues to the full, to enhance the vibrancy of the town centre and to provide more for visitors and residents to do and see throughout the day and throughout the year.

Quick Win Priorities for Street Café’s will be:

- Re-engineering streets and spaces in Palmyra Square to reinforce this as the dynamic cultural heart to the City and to support the growing entrepreneur based restaurant / bar scene. This will particularly focus on making the whole of Springfield Street as an outdoor café street – extending footways, creating shared surface areas and modifying current parking and traffic arrangements to enable businesses to establish and operate outdoor alfresco areas. This will be implemented for summer 2017.
- The further enhancement of Bridge Street in association with the delivery of the Time Square project
- With Golden Square the further use of the Old Market Place as a focus for outdoor café’s
- Working with existing and prospective café owners on the pedestrianised parts of the Town Centre to maximise outdoor café activity.
Public Art
In 2010 the Council produced its Strategy for Public Art Development – this is still relevant today. It outlines a creative framework for Warrington based on three themes:

- A Sense of Occasion
- Sources of Wonder
- Navigating Warrington

A Sense of Occasion
Warrington is rich in collective activities – festivals, sporting events. It is also rich in the variety of venues for such occasions – its parks, stadia, outdoor and the covered market, Parr Hall and the Pyramid Arts Centre. The City Centre’s sense of occasion will be reinforced through an enhanced programme of events:

- Street Markets, focusing on the new market hall and Time Square
- Street Art
- Festivals and fairs
- Busking and alfresco street cafes
- Sporting and leisure activities
- Collections
- Fairs
- Theatre, film and performance

Focusing on the enhanced use of:
- Outdoor spaces and parks particularly Warrington’s circular parklands
- Warrington’s High Streets
- The Museum and its Galleries
- Parr Hall and the Pyramid Arts Centre
- Sports arenas and venues

Sources of Wonder
Warrington is rich in jewels and sources of wonder – its architectural detailing, its bridges, the Museum collections – any of these wonders are linked to events, its industrial heritage and its people. However, the stories of these events and people are not told. The City Centre will be enhanced and enriched through presenting and interpreting these assets more effectively. The new Time Square car park is designed with reference to Warrington’s wire manufacturing past. A Warrington Story Telling project will be developed together with the interpretation of these stories through public and street art and installations.
Navigating Warrington

Warrington is a town that has been built on movement – crossings of the river and the Ship Canal, railway lines and bridges. Green open spaces and connecting landscapes and waterways are part of Warrington’s fabric. Gateway and landmark sculptures are part of Warrington’s landscape. Expanding and highlighting these place markers will aid orientation and sense of place for both residents and visitors alike and place markers will tell Warrington’s stories were they happened.

Warrington – A Creative Hub
- a focus for creative companies and creative people

Recent independent research shows that Warrington (together with Wigan, Liverpool and Manchester) form one of the most important clusters of creative industries in the UK outside London (Geography of Creativity in the UK, Nesta, 2016). Creative industries such as advertising, film, radio, TV, gaming, architecture and publishing are strong in Warrington – it is a hot-spot of creative companies and is defined as having high numbers with high growth.

We want to reinforce this and create a real focus for this cluster in our City Centre. Providing significant numbers of new homes in the City Centre has a role to enable this, so does enhancing Warrington’s connectivity (particularly rail and digital).

We propose to create a Creative Hub – a place where creative professionals can meet, network and interact and can work flexibly and informally. This Hub requires the best in terms of digital connectivity, support and work and meeting space – operated in an informal and creative way.

A new creative hub
City Centre Living
– 8,000 new homes in the heart of the City

Residential development and more people living in Warrington’s City Centre is fundamental to the City Centre masterplan. This will drive vitality, activity and foot-flow, reinforce Warrington’s sense of place and enable regeneration as well as providing new homes for local people. It will change the face of the new City Centre.

To this end the Homes and Communities Agency, Warrington & Co and the Council will work closely together to achieve this as part of the ‘Warrington New City – a garden city at the heart of the Northern Powerhouse’ programme.

All the development quarters outlined earlier have significant housing development as part of them and in total over 8,000 new homes will be provided within the City Centre by 2040. The additional priorities will be:

- **Residential development in and around rail stations** – Bank Quay Gateway, Waterfront, Stadium Quarter and Eastern Gateway (Town Hill and St Elphin’s Urban Village)
- **Living Over the Shop** - Bridge Street, Sankey Street, Buttermarket Street and Haymarket Street
- **Starter Homes** – as part of the agreed HCA Warrington Starter Home initiative
- **Maximising the reuse of brown-field land for new homes** – throughout the City Centre
- **Warrington New City** – a Garden City in the heart of the Northern Powerhouse

New homes in the heart of Warrington
A New Focus for Business
-Business space in the city centre

Warrington City Centre as the heart of the place with its excellent public transport connectivity will be the priority for business development and growth. Three particular locations will be the focus:

- **Stadium Quarter (phase 1)** – a new central business district opposite (CBD) Central Station and the Bus Interchange building upon ‘The Base’ business incubator and University Technical College.
- **Bank Quay Rail Hub** - Offices as part of the redevelopment of the station to provide one of the best connected business locations anywhere – at the intersection of HS2/WCML and Northern Powerhouse Rail (HS3) and other local and regional rail routes
- **Southern Gateway, Riverfront** – a location for new office development overlooking the proposed new Riverfront Plaza
- **Port Warrington in the Waterfront** – new port based offices, logistics and manufacturing with its connections to the Manchester Ship Canal, West Coast Mainline rail network and new access infrastructure.

City Centre Hotels
The Town Centre has very few hotels. However, as an important business location and a driver of economic growth it should have more. Our research and market analysis concludes there is growing demand for more bed space and real opportunity. The above key business locations are also priorities for new hotel development coupled with a more boutique offer in the Time Square and Cultural Quarter area.

The City Centre will be a focus for new businesses and hotel development – putting business at the heart of Warrington.

Figure 29. Business locations
Management & Maintenance
City Centre Management

The delivery of this major change programme in the heart of Warrington over the next 25 years means that there needs to be a step change in its leadership, management and its maintenance. Key priorities for this must be:

- Communicating the ongoing changes
- To work closely with traders
- Proactive Marketing – both of investment opportunities but also of events and activities
- The organisation and programming of City Centre activities, events and festivals
- Co-ordinating and programming of the use of key City Centre spaces
- Building real partnerships to deliver strong joint working
- Ensuring the City Centre is well maintained, clean and safe
- Promoting and co-ordinating street cafes and street animation
- Orientation and way marking

This needs to be built upon a key set of real and active relationships – between:
- Traders, businesses and entrepreneurs
- Residents
- Investors
- Live Wire and Culture Warrington
- Network Warrington
- Warrington Borough Council
- Warrington & Co.

This is not just about the Council. The most effective City Centre management models are based upon a public / private partnership made real through the establishment of a City Centre Management Company – funded by a mixture of private sector and public sector contributions. Such a partnership would be led by a private sector led Board and supported directly by a City Centre Management Unit. The Unit would undertake the above priorities and activities.

Therefore, we will explore this model in Warrington. – exploring best practice from exemplars across the UK and beyond including the possibility of a Business Improvement District.
Programme Management & Delivery

The delivery of this extensive and ambitious masterplan programme will be led and managed by Warrington & Co – Warrington’s partnership for growth. Figure 31 illustrates, in outline, the City Centre Masterplan delivery programme.

Figure 30. The City Centre Masterplan
City Centre Masterplan – high level delivery programme:

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