



Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee

Agenda

Date:	Friday, 29th August, 2025
Time:	10.30 am
Venue:	Committee Room, Ellesmere Port Library, Civic Way, Ellesmere Port, CH65 0BG

The agenda is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 is taken in the presence of the public and press. Part 2 items will be considered in the absence of the public and press for the reasons indicated on the agenda and at the top of each report.

PART 1 – MATTERS TO BE CONSIDERED WITH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS PRESENT

1. **Apologies for Absence**

To receive any apologies for absence from Members.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare any disclosable pecuniary, other registerable interests, and non-registerable interests in any item on the agenda.

3. **Minutes of Previous Meeting** (Pages 3 - 8)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2025 as a correct record.

For requests for further information

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4. Public Speaking/Open Session

In accordance with Cheshire East Council's Committee Procedural Rules and Appendix on public speaking, a total period of 15 minutes is allocated for members of the public to put questions to the Joint Committee on any matter relating to this agenda. Each member of the public will be allowed up to two minutes each to speak, and the Chair will have discretion to vary this where they consider it appropriate.

Members of the public wishing to ask a question at the meeting should provide at least three clear working days' notice in writing in advance of the meeting and should include the question with that notice. This will enable an informed answer to be given.

Part Two - Other Functions of the Committee

5. Cheshire and Warrington Devolution Programme and the Mayoral Combined Authority (Pages 9 - 92)

To consider a report which outlines the devolution powers, functions and future investment opportunity for Cheshire and Warrington, to be delivered via a newly created Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority in early 2026, with a duly elected mayor in May 2027, as part of the UK Government's Devolution Priority Programme.

Part One - Shareholder Functions of the Committee

6. Forward Plan (Pages 93 - 96)

To receive an update and seek direction on the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee Forward Plan.

Minutes of a meeting of the **Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee**
held on Friday, 25th July, 2025 in the Council Chamber, Warrington Town
Hall, Sankey Street, Warrington, WA1 1UH

PRESENT

Councillor L Gittins (Chair)
Councillor N Mannion (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Shore, Flaherty, M Goldsmith and Matthews

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE

Gemma Davies, Director of Economy and Housing, Cheshire West and Chester Council
Delyth Curtis, Chief Executive Officer, Cheshire West and Chester Council
Sandra Rothwell, Programme Director, Cheshire and Warrington Devolution Programme, Cheshire West and Chester Council
Philip Cresswell, Executive Director of Place, Cheshire East Council
Janet Witkowski, Acting Governance, Compliance and Monitoring Officer, Cheshire East Council
Peter Skates, Director of Growth and Enterprise, Cheshire East Council
Sam Jones, Democratic Services Officer, Cheshire East Council
Steve Park, Interim Chief Executive Officer, Warrington Borough Council
Steve Hunter, Director of Place, Warrington Borough Council
Paul Clisby, Director of Law and Governance, Warrington Borough Council

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

Joanne Moorecroft, UNISON North West's Regional Convenor
Damon Taylor, Chief Executive Officer, Cheshire Police and Crime
Gemma Southern, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner, Cheshire Police
Philip Cox, Chief Executive, Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington

7 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologie for absence were received from Councillors Michael Gorman and Hans Mundry. Councillors Mark Goldsmith and Denis Matthews were present as substitutes.

8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

9 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meetings held on 16 May 2025 and 30 May 2025 be approved as a correct record.

10 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

The public speaking procedure was noted. There were no public speakers.

11 GET CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON WORKING PLAN

Members received a report concerning the programme of work which supported economic development across Cheshire and Warrington, from Councillor Shore.

Members were updated that the government launched a “Get Britain Working” White Paper on 26 November 2024, which outlined how it would get economically inactive adults to gain and sustain employment, aiming towards a national employment rate of 80%, and a recommendation of the paper was for each local area to produce its own plan of what it wished to achieve.

It was noted that the plan would outline the vision for Cheshire and Warrington and the short-term priorities, and would work closely with the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB). The project would be coordinated by Cheshire West and Chester Council, and a Cheshire and Warrington Task Group, which contained representatives from the three local authorities, the Department for Work and Pensions, the ICB and Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington would be set up. It was noted that the high-level priorities document would be shared with stakeholders over the coming months to ensure that it met the needs of all. The final plan was required to be submitted by the end of September 2025.

It was noted that there were key issues identified which impacted employment, and trade unions were interested to be involved in the project.

RESOLVED:

That the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee agree to:

1. Note the information in this report.
2. Note and confirm that Cheshire West and Chester Council (as recommended by Growth Directors) will:
 - a. Accept the £150,000 from DWP to develop and publish the Get Cheshire and Warrington Working Plan.
 - b. Lead on the development, stakeholder engagement and submission of a Get Cheshire and Warrington Working Plan to DWP, working in partnership with a commissioned appropriate consultancy service.

c. Act as Lead and Accountable Body for the new Get Cheshire and Warrington Working programme, an activity that directly responds to an identified economic priority of the sub-region.

12 DEVOLUTION NATIONAL POLICY UPDATE

Members received a report which informed them of recent government policy and strategic announcements which highlighted potential economic growth and devolution impacts and opportunities for Cheshire and Warrington, from Councillor Mannion.

Members were updated that on 11 June 2025 the government had concluded its multi-year spending review which outlined the focus of government investments up to 2030, and set out the triggers for key national strategies and a number of investment packages which were specifically focussed on devolved areas.

It was noted that the government had committed to support “High Potential Sectors and Clusters” across the country, which would be of interest to Cheshire and Warrington, and an English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill was introduced on 10 July 2025, which built on the English Devolution White Paper and set out how the government intended to provide the tools to deliver devolution.

It was noted that, subject to relevant Council approvals, Cheshire and Warrington would be set to become a Mayoral Combined Authority in 2026, with a Mayoral election in May 2027, shifting to a Mayoral Strategic Authority in 2026. It was likely that from May 2027, the voting system for Mayoral elections would be via a supplementary vote system. It was noted that a 30-year investment fund, as well a greater control of existing funds was likely to be available to Cheshire and Warrington.

It was noted that there could be issues surrounding the borders of Cheshire Police and other blue-light services with regards to the boundary of Cheshire and Warrington.

RESOLVED:

That the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee agree to:

1. Note the latest developments in UK policy and investment linked to economic growth and devolution.
2. Note the potential impacts for future economic growth planning and devolution in Cheshire and Warrington, with further detailed reports to follow as subsequent work develops.

13 DEVOLUTION PROGRAMME: UPDATE REPORT

Members received a report which informed them of the Joint Committee's role as the overarching Devolution Programme Board and its progress against the agreed Devolution Programme and budget, from Councillor Gittins.

Members were updated that, on 17 July 2025, Cheshire and Warrington passed the governments statutory devolution tests and were able to progress towards individual council decisions at Council meetings in September 2025, ahead of the Mayoral Combined Authority being set up in early 2026, with Mayoral elections in May 2027.

It was noted that the first Workboard Engagement meeting was held on 11 July 2025 with Union and local authority HR attendees.

Members were updated that a PR campaign had been undertaken, a devolution ambassador programme and social media campaign had been launched, and work to improve community engagement was underway, which had resulted in widespread outreach. It was noted that there would be a further PR campaign ahead of Council meetings in September 2025.

It was noted that officers were working to minimise spend on the programme, and working closely with the Ministry of Housing, Community and Local Governments ahead of Council decisions in September 2025.

It was noted that Unison had concerns which would be followed up outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee agree to:

1. Note the latest overall anticipated timeline, including local decision making, of the Devolution Priority Programme in Cheshire and Warrington.
2. Note progress against programme delivery – including latest budget position and risk register.
3. Consider the Ministerial statement relating to the Devolution Priority Programme that was made on 17th July 2025 (the date of publication of this report).

14 FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED:

That the reports on the Forward Plan be adopted and approved.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 11.10 am

Councillor L Gittins (Chair)

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OPEN

29 August 2025

Cheshire and Warrington Devolution and the Mayoral Combined Authority

Report of: Cheshire and Warrington Devolution Programme Steering Group

Report Reference No: JC/11/25-26

Significant/Key Decision?	Yes/No	Definition (to be deleted once completed)
Cheshire West and Chester	No	Constitution Page 115.
Warrington	No	Constitution page 41
Cheshire East	No	Constitution Page 78

Purpose of Report

- 1 This report outlines the devolution powers, functions and future investment opportunity for Cheshire and Warrington, to be delivered via a newly created Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority in early 2026, with a duly elected mayor in May 2027, as part of the UK Government's Devolution Priority Programme.
- 2 This report seeks strategic direction from the Joint Committee for the decisions of each council (Cheshire East Borough Council, Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council and Warrington Borough Council) [the Councils] in Cheshire and Warrington as part of the formal consenting process to proceed with a Combined Authority and



associated devolution powers, functions and investment. It should be noted that this report will form the basis for key decisions of the Councils and accordingly will be reflected on their Key Decision Forward Plans in accordance with their constitutions.

Executive Summary

- 3 In January 2025 the Joint Committee agreed to take forward a devolution development programme to assess the benefits of devolution and to undertake a significant engagement programme to seek the views of businesses and residents about the impact devolution might have for the future of Cheshire and Warrington. The results of this work have been reported to the Joint Committee over the period since and is summarised in the report. The work has concluded that progressing with devolution does offer a significant benefit for residents and businesses in Cheshire and Warrington, and, from an analysis of local engagement work, an overall positive balance of residents in favour.
- 4 Following a Government Statutory Consultation on the establishment of a Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority earlier this year, the Government confirmed on the 17th July 2025 that Cheshire and Warrington had passed the statutory tests to proceed with devolution. Officers have been working closely with officials in UK Government Departments to clarify the detailed arrangements for a future Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority with associated devolved powers and functions.
- 5 The next stage in the formal process is to seek approval to establishing secondary legislation from each of the Councils in Cheshire and Warrington. Subject to decision, these will be the future constituent councils of the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority. The report details the next steps if the Councils decide to proceed, as well as the consequences if one or more of the Councils do not approve.
- 6 The report details the initial proposed arrangements to create the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority. It should be noted that this would be created under existing Government legislation.
- 7 The report also gives an overview of the future impacts of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill which would designate the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority as a Mayoral Strategic Authority and automatically confer additional devolution powers onto it, subject to the Bill's successful passage through parliamentary processes.



- 8 It should be noted that this report references draft Parliamentary Orders. These documents cannot be shared as this would breach parliamentary privilege. Statutory instruments are to be considered as 'confidential information' as defined in s100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, as information furnished to the Council by a Government department upon terms (however expressed) which forbid the disclosure of the information to the public. Statutory instruments are exempt from disclosure or publication before they are laid in Parliament to avoid infringing on parliamentary privilege or breaching Chapter nine of the Ministerial Code. However, while the documents cannot be shared themselves, detailed summaries can be provided, as below and in Appendix A.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In accordance with its function to provide strategic direction and oversight across potential devolution for Cheshire and Warrington, the Joint Committee is recommended to endorse the following recommendations for decision by each of the Councils in Cheshire and Warrington, in line with each Council's constitutional arrangements:

1. To approve in principle the establishment of a Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority in accordance with existing legislation under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (as amended).
2. To delegate authority to the Chief Executive Officers (Head of Paid Service), or their authorised deputy, to consent to the making of the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Order 2026 in accordance with s.110(1)(b) Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.
3. To agree to hold inaugural mayoral elections in May 2027.
4. Subject to approval of the above recommendations, to create a new joint committee, to be known as the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Shadow Board, to provide strategic direction and interim arrangements in the best interests of the establishment of a Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority.
5. To approve the Terms of Reference for the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Shadow Board as outlined at Appendix B and to



delegate authority to the Constituent Members of the Shadow Board to carry out the roles and functions as set out in the Terms of Reference.

6. To note that the Constituent Members for the Shadow Board will be the Leaders and Deputy Leaders of each constituent council as set out in the proposed Terms of Reference.
7. To amend the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee Terms of Reference as outlined at Appendix C to reflect the revised function of the Joint Committee following establishment of the Combined Authority Shadow Board.
8. To appoint new membership from each Council to the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee in accordance with the Joint Committee Terms of Reference.
9. To delegate authority to the Chief Executives, in consultation with the Leaders, of each constituent council, to take all other steps necessary to establish and implement the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority.

Report Detail

A. Strategic rationale

- 9 Cheshire and Warrington Leaders are committed to achieve the shared vision for the area to be the healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive and growing economy in the UK by 2045. The 2045 Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Strategy has recently completed its consultation and will be taken forward via the appropriate governance process after September 2025.
- 10 Cheshire and Warrington has one of the most productive economies in the UK, with output per head 25% higher than Greater Manchester and 50% higher than in Liverpool City Region. It also has a number of opportunities to build on that success by taking advantage of:



- (a) The Government's recent investment of £11 billion into hydrogen production and carbon capture and storage in Cheshire and Warrington and its investment into new nuclear power;
 - (b) the strong cluster of life science companies shared with Greater Manchester and Liverpool City Regions; and
 - (c) our strong advanced manufacturing cluster.
- 11 Notwithstanding these strengths, Cheshire and Warrington has large numbers of working age adults who are sick and disabled, a shortage of people with the skills needed by employers, 28,000 children living in poverty and a 16-year gap in healthy life expectancy between the least and most prosperous areas in the subregion.
- 12 The draft Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Strategy proposes that Cheshire and Warrington should commit to a series of targets that, by 2045, would make the region the healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive and growing place in the country. These include having the highest rate of growth in the North, reducing carbon emissions to zero, improving life and healthy life expectancies so that they are above the national average everywhere and having no communities ranked in the bottom 20% of the Index of Multiple Deprivation.
- 13 A report outlining the content and implications of recent UK Government strategy and policy was presented to this committee in July 2025. Members of the committee agreed that there is a clear emphasis for future Government investment and support on those areas with a strategic approach to delivering sustainable growth. Specifically, that those areas with devolved governance arrangements through Combined Authorities with a mayor are best placed to receive Government support, maximise private investment and to deliver maximum impact for businesses, communities and residents with the scale and focus that these devolved arrangements bring.
- 14 Devolution and the creation of a Combined Authority offers a key mechanism to help achieve this vision. New and innovative ways of working via the powers, functions and investment that a Combined Authority would have from 'day one', gives Cheshire and Warrington the best chance to deliver real and lasting improvements for residents and businesses. These include:



- (a) Investing the expected 30-year Mayoral Investment Fund to take advantage of key growth and investment opportunities, including in clean energy industries, life sciences and advanced manufacturing, as well as greater control over several funds currently managed by Government departments, including adult skills, employment support, brownfield land investment and business support.
- (b) Working in partnership (and in some instances via a statutory role) with key Government agencies and stakeholders, including Network Rail, train operating companies and National Highways. A 'strategic place partnership' with Homes England to align resources and focus. A strategic partnership with the Department for Business and Trade to bring together resources and interventions to boost business growth, exports and encourage inward investment, as well as new relationships with Great British Energy and UK Research and Innovation.
- (c) With these new partnership arrangements, devolved powers, a significant investment fund and other devolved funds, the Combined Authority could, in the first few years of being established for example, increase funding for training and support to tackle disadvantage by helping people back into work, deliver much-needed transport improvements, give additional support for growing businesses, unlock land for development and regenerate town centres.
- (d) Embed priority policies across all activities of the Combined Authority, including tackling health inequality, promoting inclusion, specific issues linked to rurality and building-in sustainability and climate change resilience.
- (e) The greater profile and voice that comes from a seat on the Council of Nations and Regions and the new Great North Mayoral partnership would amplify Cheshire and Warrington's work to, for example, gain Ministerial support for the regeneration of Crewe; make the case for further expansion of hydrogen production and CO² capture, cementing Cheshire and Warrington's position as a world leader in decarbonisation; and ensuring Ministers and Northern Mayors recognise the huge growth opportunities in Cheshire and Warrington.



- (f) Develop fully integrated public transport inspired by the Manchester Bee Network and Transport for London (TfL). Cheshire and Warrington would be able to make bus travel more convenient, reliable, affordable and attractive, better connecting rural areas and providing tickets that can be used on both buses and trains.
- (g) A Combined Authority's new role in governing, managing, planning and developing the rail network would provide greater influence in the Liverpool-Manchester and West Midlands-Manchester Railway discussions, including influencing the delivery of Crewe Hub Station improvements.
- (h) Help tackle poverty and improve healthy life expectancies by making homes warmer and more affordable to heat by accelerating the retrofit of properties with green, energy-saving technology such as solar panels and air-source heat pumps, funded through devolution and via the Government's Warm Homes Plan.
- (i) Invest in and support the growth of the Cheshire Science Corridor and transformational opportunities in life sciences, advanced manufacturing and clean energy (key sectors in the Modern Industrial Strategy).
- (j) Turbocharge promotion of Cheshire and Warrington as one of the best places to live, work, invest, learn and visit.

B. Timeline

- 15 It is important to outline and understand the anticipated timeline for the creation and development of the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority.
 - (a) **September 2025:** The constituent councils decide whether to consent to create a Combined Authority.
 - (b) **October 2025 – early 2026:** Subject to the decision to proceed across all three constituent councils, the UK Government will lay an Order before each of the Houses of Parliament referred to as the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Order 2026. As well as approval from each House, the making of the Order will require consent from each of the constituent councils to modify existing legislation and establish as a body corporate the Cheshire



and Warrington Combined Authority. It is anticipated this could be created as early as February 2026. During this period, via the shadow arrangements described below, there will be certain 'day one' functions that will need to be developed locally, including certain posts to be in place (statutory posts) and other pre-operational decisions related to set-up and governance.

- (c) **Early 2026:** The Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority will be operational and will receive powers and funding from Government under existing legislation.
- (d) **Mid-2026:** The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill will complete its Parliamentary process through to legislation. Cheshire and Warrington will become a Mayoral Strategic Authority (MSA) under the new legislation and the additional powers and functions contained within this legislation will be devolved to it.
- (e) **May 2027:** Mayoral elections will take place across Cheshire and Warrington.
- (f) **2028 onwards:** Subject to meeting assurance criteria, the Cheshire and Warrington Mayoral Strategic Authority can become an Established Mayoral Strategic Authority 18 months after the mayoral election, with further additional powers and flexibilities, including a fully integrated financial settlement from the UK Government.

C. Governance

- 16 Civil servants from key Government Departments (primarily the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Department for Transport) have been working with officers from the three Councils to finalise draft regulations to establish the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority – this will be 'the Cheshire and Warrington Mayoral Combined Authority Order 2026'. The exact wording of the Order must remain confidential until it is laid before Parliament. However, a summary of the provisions of the Order are attached at Appendix A.
- 17 The Order will establish a mayor for the area, to be democratically elected every four years from May 2027. As well as the board of the Combined Authority, two statutory committees must be established: a Scrutiny Committee and an Audit Committee. The chair of the Scrutiny Committee



must be from a different political party than the mayor with one to three elected Members appointed from each constituent council to ensure political balance, as well as co-opted independent members.

- 18 The Order will also establish the Combined Authority as the Local Transport Authority for Cheshire and Warrington, to enable the Combined Authority to perform its transport functions, such as the development of a local transport plan as well as passenger transport powers to support an integrated approach to delivering excellent transport services for the area.
- 19 The Order includes a **statutory constitution** setting out the framework on which the Combined Authority will be established. This provides consistency across all newly established combined authorities (and will also apply to existing combined authorities following the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill's passage through Parliament). The Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority can also agree a local constitution, which must be based on the statutory articles.
- 20 Key aspects of the statutory constitution, which will be prescribed by the Order, are as follows:
 - (a) Membership: Each constituent council must appoint two elected members to the Combined Authority. Both members must also have one named elected member substitute appointed (i.e. two elected members and two named substitutes). Each member will have one vote. The proceedings of the Combined Authority are invalid if there are vacancies amongst the members and substitutes members. This has been determined as the most effective decision-making arrangement by Government under the statutory requirements.
 - (b) The appointed Combined Authority members must appoint a chair and vice chair from the constituent council members at their first formal board meeting. The chair and vice chair positions will end on the day before the first mayor's term of office begins.
 - (c) Once elected, the mayor will be the chair of the Combined Authority and has the statutory power to appoint a deputy mayor from the Combined Authority members (replacing the chair and vice chair positions above).



- (d) The deputy mayor must be chosen from one of the members of the Combined Authority in accordance with statutory requirements. If the deputy mayor is acting in the place of the mayor, the deputy mayor's substitute can be present.
- (e) The Combined Authority can have up to six non-constituent (stakeholder organisations) and associate (individual) members (as Combined Authorities cannot have more non-constituent and associate members than it has constituent members). All of these members/ organisations must nominate a named substitute.
- (f) All decisions of the Combined Authority will be made by a simple majority of the members present. Once the mayor's term of office has started, any majority must include the mayor or the deputy mayor in place of the mayor. There will be no casting votes and no tied votes.
- (g) Before the first mayor's term of office begins, all business of the Combined Authority must be transacted with the chair (or vice-chair in their absence) present, as well as at least three members appointed by the constituent councils. The legislation will not require representation from each constituent council to be quorate. After the mayor's term of office begins, the mayor (or deputy mayor acting in place of the mayor) must be present at all meetings, as well as four members appointed by the constituent councils.

D. Powers and functions: 'Day One'

21 Initially, the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority would have those core powers and functions associated with existing legislation. These powers and functions will take effect from the creation of the Combined Authority in 2026. Specifically:

- (a) **Economic development and regeneration functions:** This will empower the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority to exercise the functions of the constituent councils under section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, known as the General Power of Competence, to the extent that those functions relate to economic development and regeneration. This power will be held jointly with the constituent councils.
- (b) **Transport functions:** The Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority will become the Local Transport Authority for the



Cheshire and Warrington area and will exercise a number of functions under both the Transport Act 2000 and Transport Act 1985 as below: -

- (i) Transport Act 2000: Exercising a number of powers jointly with each constituent council for a transition period, expected to be one year. The major function being that the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority will be responsible for the development and adoption of a Local Transport Plan. After the transition period such powers will be exercisable only by the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority
- (ii) Transport Act 1985: These functions are proposed to be exercised jointly with the constituent councils in perpetuity and include: -
 - 1. Hold passenger transport functions;
 - 2. allow the formation and running of companies to run bus undertakings;
 - 3. hold the power to pay grants for transport facilities and bus services.

E. Powers and functions: English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill

- 22 At the 25th July 2025 Joint Committee, members received a report on the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill. This report gave an overview of the Bill and implications for Cheshire and Warrington.
- 23 It explained that the Bill outlines a consistent approach to devolution across England, giving greater consistency across both existing and new devolved areas in terms of governance and powers. It creates a new category of authority in England, 'the Strategic Authority', and aims to make it quicker and easier to devolve powers away from Westminster to local government, outlining the routes to achieve further devolved powers over time.
- 24 The Bill sets out a clear framework with a standardised set of legal powers, governance arrangements, funding commitments and partnership/collaboration arrangements with Government. It is a clear



move away from negotiated deals and inconsistencies across devolved areas.

- 25 It should be noted that the Bill would also enable the Secretary of State to establish a new Strategic Authority or expand existing institutions without the consent of local areas. Whilst the Government has been clear it would limit the use of this power to instances when other routes had been exhausted, it should nonetheless be noted that this power would exist.
- 26 Subject to its passage through the Parliamentary process, Appendix A details all the powers and functions which are anticipated to be devolved to the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority – which would at this same time become the Cheshire and Warrington Mayoral Strategic Authority. These functions extend across seven competencies and include:
 - (a) Additional transport powers including the ability to progress with bus franchising, oversight of the most important local roads in the area (a Key Route Network) and (via other legislation) a statutory role in governing, managing, planning and developing the rail network and local stations;
 - (b) skills and employment support via the transfer of adult education functions and the devolution of the Adult Skills Fund. This fund will be non-ringfenced so that the Strategic Authority can determine how best to use the fund via the creation of a local skills plan. Employment support funding would also be devolved to support those furthest from employment to find and sustain a job. The Joint Committee has previously agreed the development of a 'Get Cheshire and Warrington Working Plan' to support the prioritisation of these funds;
 - (c) housing and strategic planning including the power to prepare a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) which would align with the Councils' Local Development Plans but with a focus on strategic development opportunities across the whole subregion. Following agreement of the SDS this would give the Strategic Authority additional powers to intervene in planning applications of strategic importance (currently the power to 'call in' sits with the Secretary of State – this would transfer to the mayor), the option to charge a Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy on new major developments to support infrastructure requirements and the ability



to designate Mayoral Development Areas and establish Mayoral Development Corporations to support delivery of large, complex development and regeneration projects;

- (d) economic growth and regeneration, including producing a local growth plan and investment pipeline – which would agree shared priorities with Government and other public organisations such as UK Research and Intelligence. The Bill also requires Strategic Authorities to work with the Local Government Pension Scheme to jointly invest in local projects which deliver social and/or economic benefits to local communities (as well as financial return);
- (e) the Bill does not transfer statutory environmental or climate-related functions to Strategic Authorities, but it gives the responsibility for the development and delivery of Local Nature Recovery Strategies and does commit to explore future opportunities for devolution in this area;
- (f) Strategic Authorities will have a legal requirement to ‘have regard’ to the need to reduce health inequality and improve people’s health in the area. Health impacts should be considered in all Strategic Authority policies;
- (g) because a future Strategic Authority and the Cheshire Constabulary have different boundaries, a future mayor would not be responsible for exercising police functions.
- (h) The Bill also outlines further general mayoral powers under the General Power of Competence.

27 It is anticipated that there are areas that a future Strategic Authority would want to pursue additional devolution powers and functions. For example, the Bill is largely silent on rural affairs and specific devolved opportunities from DEFRA.

F. Shadow Arrangements

28 Subject to a decision to proceed, arrangements will need to be put in place to ensure that Cheshire and Warrington will be ready for a ‘go live’ operational date which could be as early as February 2026.

29 As noted below, there will be specific ‘day one’ functions that need to be in place for this schedule, requiring certain staffing (including statutory



posts) and other pre-operational decisions related to set-up and governance. For example, the Combined Authority will require at least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee and one Audit Committee in line with the requirements of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009. Shadow arrangements will also ensure that the values and principles that constituent councils want to embed in the Combined Authority can be developed early to shape future decisions and operations, as well as the initial creation of a local constitution. The local constitution, which must be based on the statutory articles, can include more bespoke arrangements to suit local circumstances.

- 30 The Governance Workstream for the devolution work programme, comprising Monitoring Officers from each constituent council, has considered options for shadow arrangements and recommends creating a new formally constituted joint committee under Part VI of the Local Government Act 1972 and Part I Chapter 2 of the Local Government Act 2000. This will be referred to as the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Shadow Board (the Shadow Board).
- 31 The shadow arrangement would operate collaboratively from within the constituent councils in an advisory approach to oversee the implementation programme of establishing the Combined Authority. It is important therefore that the shadow arrangements mobilise as soon as possible after a decision to proceed with devolution.
- 32 The Leaders and Deputy Leaders of the three constituent councils would be appointed to the membership of the Shadow Board, with the option to appoint other members on a non-voting basis as may be considered necessary to achieve the business of the Shadow Board.
- 33 The Terms of Reference for the Shadow Board set out the decision-making powers and roles and functions of the Shadow Board. This report seeks a delegation from each of the constituent councils to the Shadow Board to carry out the roles and functions in paragraph nine of the Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference are appended at Appendix B.
- 34 Alternative options have also been considered for the shadow arrangements including:
 - (a) a sub-committee of the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee; or



- (b) a committee in common of the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee.
- 35 On an appraisal of the advantages and disadvantages of all options, the above options (a) and (b) were considered to generate risk of potential conflicts of interest, more complex administration, and lack of opportunity to develop an independent culture for the new Combined Authority.
- 36 The decision to create a Shadow Board would require the existing Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee to remain, focusing on its role as the shareholder board for Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington. The Terms of Reference for the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee, Part Two, are recommended for amendment accordingly as set out in Appendix C.
- 37 If the decision is not to proceed with devolution, it is recommended that the current arrangements and functions for the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee remain in place with no amendment to the current Terms of Reference.

G. Operating Model

- 38 The Governance and Finance Workstreams of the devolution programme have undertaken some early analysis of future operating models for the Combined Authority. Analysis focused on overarching principles of cost, achievability and quality across the future likely functional competencies of a Combined Authority. The potential phasing of any operating model was also considered – noting that a number of future functional competencies will be reliant on the passage of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill through Parliament.
- 39 Whilst any decisions on future set-up will need to be agreed in detail initially with the shadow arrangements described above, the following headlines from the initial analysis of options should be noted:
- (a) The Combined Authority should be a predominantly strategic, commissioning body.
- (b) Any operational model must be delivered within available Combined Authority resources and have no call on additional council resources.



- (c) A proportionate and flexible ‘day one’ structure should be agreed that avoids making long-term assumptions.
 - (d) Any model must be flexible enough to allow additional functions as required – and optimises Cheshire and Warrington’s ability to deliver its regional and local priorities.
 - (e) The initial phase of the Combined Authority (to mid/late 2026) would need to be a small, core organisation that includes statutory posts and a minimum number of other core posts that can deliver demonstrable value from ‘day one’. It is anticipated the following may form a day one staffing structure, subject to agreement of the Shadow Board:
 - (i) Head of Paid Service (statutory)
 - (ii) Section 73 Officer (statutory)
 - (iii) Monitoring Officer (statutory)
 - (iv) Scrutiny Officer (statutory)
 - (v) Administrative support
 - (vi) Communications support
 - (vii) Policy support
 - (f) Additional staffing requirements would follow as functions were devolved to the Combined Authority – some of which may be transitional in nature. This is described in more detail under the Workforce and Financial sections below.
- 40 Between October 2025 and formal set up of the Combined Authority in early 2026, the final agreed posts will need to be recruited on a secondment or interim basis. These postholders will put all required operational arrangements in place to ensure its ability to practically fulfil its day one functions and responsibilities.
- 41 There will be various options available to ensure operational readiness; these options may include the Combined Authority securing its own service arrangements (for ICT, HR, Procurement support for example) or arranging “buy back” to access these services from one of the Councils. Available options will be appraised and recommendations made for



decision by the Shadow Board as early as possible, to allow time for the arrangements to be put in place. Once the Combined Authority is operational, they will be better placed to make longer term decisions around how they wish to organise themselves, including the level of ongoing support they require.

- 42 It is envisaged that while the shadow arrangements are in place the seconded or interim posts (which will either be filled by current staff from across one of the three Councils or Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington or alternatively by an external interim) will be hosted by Cheshire West and Chester Council. Any support required by the Combined Authority as part of this hosting (for example payroll, access to facilities and equipment) may be provided through formal "buy back" arrangements which will be documented in Service Level Agreements (SLA) with the relevant support services in the Council. Arrangements will also need to be made to ensure the shadow Combined Authority is able to access any buildings or meeting room facilities they require across the sub region (again within SLA arrangements).
- 43 **Workforce:** Key workforce issues for the Combined Authority from inception will be its Pay and HR policies, the potential TUPE of staff aligned with the functions of the Combined Authority and the recruitment to statutory and other posts on a temporary or permanent basis. Direction and decisions will need to be made by the Shadow Board and/or new Combined Authority, with engagement and consultation with the Trade Unions and staffing representatives of all impacted staff as required.
- 44 In respect of the statutory posts, it is expected these will be filled by day one of the Combined Authority on a secondment or interim basis which will enable the new authority to consider the timing and process of recruitment for its own independent statutory officers.

H. Financial position

- 45 **Financial Governance:** While a new Combined Authority would be separate from the three constituent councils, the four entities will need to work together under a broader financial framework being established under the new Statutory Instruments and the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill. A key aspect of that framework will be an obligation on the three constituent councils to ensure that the Combined Authority can access the necessary funding to discharge its functions effectively. In effect, this means that the Councils could be asked to



financially support the Combined Authority, if it was unable to discharge its functions from other available funding streams.

- 46 The constituent councils cannot be liable for any expenditure, unless the Combined Authority has approved such a request in accordance with its budget decision-making processes (either as per the Finance Order 2017 for mayoral budget or simple majority including the mayor for Combined Authority budget). As the constituent councils hold six votes on the Combined Authority, they would have significant influence over any such request. None of the existing Combined Authorities have needed to call on their constituent councils for additional funding under this provision.
- 47 The financial position outlined above should be viewed in the context of the functions, responsibilities and funding position of the Combined Authority. It is a strategic body that will largely determine its own plans and priorities, rather than facing the statutory demand-led pressures that cause most Council budget challenges. Council representatives on the Combined Authority will help shape those priorities and the scale of any investment. The Mayoral Investment Fund gives the Combined Authority a substantial funding stream with significant discretion as to how it is used, providing the Combined Authority with the flexibility to align plans with funding and operate within its financial means.
- 48 If managed effectively the Combined Authority should not create a significant additional financial risk to the Councils, but to minimise that risk it is critical that the Combined Authority is set up with effective governance, a robust financial assurance framework and strong financial management. Key safeguards will include the establishment of an Audit Committee and a statutory Chief Financial Officer post (otherwise known as a Section 73 Officer). This post is similar in nature to a Council Section 151 officer and will have a legal responsibility to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs, including establishing adequate controls and setting a balanced budget each year.
- 49 The Combined Authority will need to set out its arrangements for ensuring strong financial governance in a published Assurance Framework. This will set out the key roles, governance, controls and procedures for ensuring the Combined Authority uses public money in a transparent, responsible and effective manner. This document will need to be submitted to Government by the Combined Authority and approved before 2026-27 funding is released.



- 50 **Funding:** Details of the initial funding and investment package available for the Combined Authority on 'day one' are expected to be confirmed by the Government in early/mid-September 2025. Therefore, at this stage, it is only possible to give broad indications of likely funding in most areas, drawing on information available in the Government's 10-year Spending Review, Modern Industrial and Infrastructure strategies as well as the experience of existing Combined Authorities.
- 51 Those funds are likely to include a combination of specific mayoral investment funding, devolved Government funding, existing funding linked to services that will become the responsibility of the Combined Authority and local income sources (such as Enterprise Zone funding). The mayor, subject to relevant governance and approvals, will also have the power to raise funds through precepts.
- 52 **Mayoral Investment Fund:** The Mayoral Investment Fund will provide a major source of additional funding for the Combined Authority that would otherwise not be available to the area. Based on precedents in other areas, Cheshire and Warrington could expect to receive a 30-year investment fund (illustratively, an allocation of c.£20 million per year would secure over £600 million over 30 years). Allocations for the first year (2026-27) are likely to be at a lower level (c.£10m) given the mayor will not be elected until May 2027.
- 53 This fund will provide a mixture of capital and revenue funding to support the Combined Authority's long-term investment strategy and priorities. Long-term priorities for the fund will ultimately need to be agreed with the elected mayor once in place, but an initial investment framework will be developed to help evaluate and demonstrate how different investments could generate positive and sustainable benefits for the sub-region.
- 54 **Funding for Combined Authority Functions:** The Combined Authority will gain control over a number of specific functional areas currently managed by Government Departments, including adult skills, employment support, brownfield land investment and business support. The funds to deliver these programmes will be devolved to the Combined Authority, but the pace at which such funds will be incorporated into the Combined Authority will vary by Department, with the full transfer being phased in over the first two to three years of the life of the Combined Authority.
- 55 The Combined Authority will also take on some roles currently delivered directly by the Councils and will become the primary recipient of any



- Government funding linked to those roles. In the first year this would include taking on the Local Transport Authority role for the area, and responsibility for administering funding such as the Local Transport Grant. Transitional arrangements would give the Councils a period of joint control over how such funds are used.
- 56 **Capacity funding:** If the Councils confirm they wish to proceed with devolution in mid-September, then the Government will release £1m of Capacity Grant funding for 2025-26. As approved by Joint Committee on 25 July 2025, this initial £1m grant will be applied to meet Combined Authority set up and preparatory costs in the period leading up to February/March 2026. This activity is expected to be deliverable within that funding allocation.
 - 57 Further Mayoral Capacity Funding is expected to be paid to the Combined Authority over its first three years. This will be used in concert with the investment fund and specific grants to support the costs of mobilising the Combined Authority, embedding initial functions and preparation for mayoral elections in 2027.
 - 58 The deferral of the mayoral election to May 2027 will mean it would coincide with Council elections in Cheshire East and Cheshire West and Chester, reducing costs to both the Combined Authority and the respective Councils. However, it would still be a substantial cost that would need to be borne by the Combined Authority. It has been confirmed that the cost of the election can be met from the Mayoral Investment Fund and this cost would be factored into planned usage of those funds.
 - 59 **Enterprise Zone funding:** On 26 June 2025 the Government wrote to the local Councils indicating that the Cheshire Science Corridor Enterprise Zone (EZ) should form part of the new Combined Authority once it had been established. The EZ is currently managed by Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington (ECW) and generates retained business rates income of approx. £3m per year which is used to part fund the economic growth activities of ECW and Marketing Cheshire, as well as meeting loan repayments back to the Councils.
 - 60 The EZ activities currently provided by ECW are expected to be subsumed into the Combined Authority once the body has been established. The EZ funds and responsibility to fund any ongoing activities and ongoing loan repayments would transfer to the Combined Authority from that point. ECW also hold an EZ reserve (currently £2.8m)



that would transfer. This provides a backstop in case of financial loss or failure from any of the EZ funded schemes, but also potentially provides the Combined Authority with some additional capacity and resilience.

- 61 Without reducing existing services funded from the EZ funding, there would be limited scope for the Combined Authority to draw on EZ funds to support new activities or functions. However, other established Mayoral Combined Authorities have been given permission to increase their retained business rate income, through measures such as extending Enterprise Zones and increasing their retention shares e.g. Greater Manchester Combined Authority retains 99% of business rates to fund investment in transport infrastructure, housing and skills. The Councils have sought support from Government to explore similar options for Cheshire and Warrington, although this is not expected to be part of the initial devolution process.
- 62 **Precept:** Once in office, the mayor would have the power to set a council tax precept, with 2027-28 being the first financial year to which this could apply. A precept could only be raised if approved by both the mayor and the overall Combined Authority, and if approved would be collected via the local Councils. Voting arrangements for the precept vary, depending on whether the precept is on mayoral functions, or wider Combined Authority functions:
- (a) Mayors will continue to be subject to voting rules set out in previous legislation on precepts raised against mayoral functions. This is commonly that a mayor can propose a precept, but that request can be amended or rejected by a 2/3 majority of constituent authorities.
 - (b) A Mayor wanting to raise a precept on wider Combined Authority functions would be subject to the standard voting arrangements of a simple majority including the mayor.
- 63 Locally, the Liverpool City Region levied a precept of £24 per Band D property, to raise approx. £10.5m to invest in Mayoral priorities such as ultra-fast digital connectivity, a Mayoral Transport Plan and an apprenticeship portal. Other Combined Authorities such as the Tees Valley Combined Authority have chosen not to levy a precept to date.

I. Final changes to Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Order



- 64 This report has highlighted that the Order to create the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority is in draft and is a confidential document. As it goes through the initial stages of the Parliamentary process there may be small technical changes to the wording of the Order. It is not expected that these will fundamentally change the content of the Order.
- 65 It is therefore recommended that any minor technical changes are delegated for approval to the Chief Executive Officers (Head of Paid Service), or their authorised deputy, to consent to the making of the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Order 2026 in accordance with s.110(1)(b) Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 66 This report seeks strategic direction from the Joint Committee for the decisions of each council (Cheshire East Borough Council, Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council and Warrington Borough Council) [the Councils] in Cheshire and Warrington as part of the formal consenting process to proceed with a Combined Authority and associated devolution powers, functions and investment.
- 67 From the results of the work developed via Cheshire and Warrington's Devolution Programme, it is clear that devolution will offer a key mechanism to help achieve the subregional vision and to deliver real and lasting impacts for residents and business.
- 68 The recommendations also set out the arrangements that will need to be put in place should the Councils decide to proceed, including finalising technical amendments to the Statutory Instrument, the creation of shadow arrangements to support effective set up and concurrent changes to the terms of reference the existing Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee.
- 69 There is an option not to proceed. This would mean that the current Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee would remain in place and its terms of reference would not be amended. This option has not been recommended. In a previous report to the Joint Committee (National Strategy: Update Report, 25th July 2025) it was noted that Government policy and funding is, on the whole, targeted to devolved areas – devolution is the default position across England. Not proceeding with devolution increases the risk that investment and support will not be



forthcoming. I.e. there is an opportunity cost if devolution is not taken forward as investment will be prioritised to Combined Authority areas.

- 70 It should also be noted that under the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill, the Secretary of State would be able to establish a new Strategic Authority or expand existing institutions without the consent of local areas. Whilst the Government has been clear it would limit the use of this power to instances when other routes had been exhausted, it should nonetheless be noted that this power would exist. Under such circumstance, or if the Councils decided to progress with devolution at a later date, Cheshire and Warrington would not be part of the Devolution Priority Programme which gives access to additional support, including specific capacity funding as outlined in the report.

Comments from the Business Advisory Board (BAB)

- 71 The Cheshire and Warrington Business Advisory Board (BAB) unanimously supports the establishment of the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority and the progression of the devolution agreement. The Board is clear that this is the single most critical activity to reshape the future of the subregion—unlocking the powers, investment and freedoms needed to deliver long-term, inclusive growth. Devolution offers an unprecedented opportunity to accelerate business-led innovation, tackle structural challenges and improve the prosperity and wellbeing of residents across Cheshire and Warrington. The BAB urges all partners to commit fully to this agenda as the foundation for transformational change.

Other Consultation and Engagement

- 72 A comprehensive strategy has underpinned Cheshire and Warrington's approach to communications and engagement since September 2024, and engagement has been undertaken, at key milestones, with councillors, staff, MPs, relevant committees/boards, businesses, and partner organisations, as well as our residents through a programme of community engagement. A summary of activity is included at Appendix E.
- 73 **Local communications:** A series of press releases and media features have been issued, focusing on the potential benefits of devolution, the decision-making process, and other key updates along the Cheshire and Warrington devolution journey.



- 74 There has been a sustained social media campaign, with a dedicated focus on targeting younger people, to ensure that any age demographic “gaps” have been addressed.
- 75 Part of the communications campaign has focused on ensuring a broad spread of local voices have been amplified, offering their views on devolution. To that end, through the engagement programme, a number of devolution “ambassadors” have shared their views about the potential benefits – this includes people across business, community services, housing, education. and beyond. Equally, through dedicated face-to-face community engagement events across Cheshire and Warrington, public views about devolution have been sought and shared, ensuring that authentic local voices have been able to share their views on the benefits of devolution.
- 76 Raising awareness of devolution, what it means and what its benefits are, is an intensive ongoing challenge. While there has been a sustained “myth busting” element to the overall communications and engagement plan, it is accepted that many communities and individuals are yet to understand what devolution could mean for Cheshire and Warrington. To that end, work on the communications plan continues in earnest, to ensure as many people and communities as possible understand what devolution could mean for Cheshire and Warrington.
- 77 **Local community engagement:** To support with local engagement work, an agency has been commissioned, Social, to facilitate a programme of in-person community engagement across Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Warrington, with a key focus on targeted youth engagement. The local engagement programme delivered by Social ran for an approximate six-week period, from 4 May to 13 June 2025.
- 78 The community engagement programme identified three strands of activity with tailored engagement methods and approaches designed to meet the needs of three key local audiences:
 - (a) Local residents and communities
 - (b) Businesses and stakeholders
 - (c) Young people



- 79 Resident and youth engagement activity was replicated in all three council areas, ensuring a representative and reflective view from across the area, and that local nuances could be captured and presented to the respective councils.
- 80 The three councils and partners, including Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington, have already undertaken substantial briefings and engagement with key stakeholders and business representatives across the area. Given this, , it was decided that the stakeholder and business engagement strand of activity would be more effectively undertaken later in the year, once details of specific devolved powers and investment for Cheshire and Warrington have been confirmed by Government.
- 81 **Activity to date includes:**
- (a) Launch of Cheshire and Warrington devolution website: [Cheshire and Warrington Devolution](#)
 - (b) Sustained media campaign (including promotion of Government consultation, key updates, and myth busters linked to devolution) - more than 1million reads of coverage so far
 - (c) Launch of ambassador programme – sharing testimonials and continued engagement with identified ambassadors
 - (d) Devolution newsletter – [first issue July 2025](#)
 - (e) Social media – improving visibility/engagement across Cheshire and Warrington devolution accounts, myth-busting/dispelling misinformation, sharing FAQs etc. (more than 1.1 million impressions to-date)
 - (f) Internal communications – with staff across the three councils/ECW
 - (g) Business engagement – in partnership with the Business Advisory Board/ECW
 - (h) Member engagement – programme of activity across three councils
 - (i) Voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise organisations and town and parish councils - programme of activity across three council areas.



- 82 **Summary of member engagement:** Each of the three Councils has established a cross-party member group to understand, consider and advise on devolution. This has taken the form of the Devolution Member Reference Group in Cheshire East Council, the Devolution and Subregional Working Taskforce in Cheshire West and Chester Council, and the Devolution Taskgroup in Warrington Borough Council. These groups have been meeting regularly throughout the development of the devolution programme.
- 83 The three cross-party groups also came together to invite individuals with practical experience of devolution. Discussions were held with Ben Houchen (Mayor of Tees Valley), Oliver Coppard (Mayor of South Yorkshire), and Cllr Liam Robinson (Leader of Liverpool City Council and member of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority).
- 84 All Members have been informed and engaged in the developing devolution programme through regular written briefings and All-Member Briefing Meetings for each council. These have allowed Members to hear presentations on progress and raise questions with Leaders and senior officers.
- 85 A cross-council All-Member Briefing also allowed members to hear from a range of local business representatives on their views on devolution, as well as to raise any questions on the programme.
- 86 **Statutory consultation analysis:** Following confirmation of Cheshire and Warrington's inclusion on the Devolution Priority Programme (DPP), Government launched its own statutory consultation into the area's devolution proposals (which ran from 17 February to 13 April 2025). During this time, DPP areas were asked not to carry out their own localised community engagement work until the end of the statutory consultation period. Therefore, while local effort was made by the three councils and key partners to promote the consultation, this was a consultation led by Government, with a set number of fixed questions across all six DPP areas.
- 87 The statutory consultation, which asked a number of detailed questions about devolution, closed in April 2025. The consultation outcome was published by Government in July 2025. 1,663 responses were received overall across Cheshire and Warrington.



- 88 Respondents in favour said that devolution would provide opportunities to:
- (a) Improve the local economy: attracting further investment into the region and allowing for investment decisions to be shaped by local priorities
 - (b) Improve local governance: with greater potential for more decisions to be made locally by people who know the region
 - (c) Improve public services: Enabling better public transport and connectivity and enhancing local public services.
 - (d) Promote local identity and collaboration: Building on and further reinforcing the existing track record of joint working across the area.
- 89 Respondents who had concerns about the proposal cited:
- (a) Worries about bureaucracy and costs: with concerns around additional layers of bureaucracy and whether it would add another layer to the infrastructure
 - (b) Geographical and structural issues: perceptions that the area is too big, and that market towns and rural areas could be disadvantaged compared to larger towns and cities.
 - (c) Financial and resource concerns: concerns that funding the Combined Authority would increase costs and taxes on local businesses and individuals
 - (d) Confidence in delivery: some respondents demonstrated a lack of confidence in the local government sector's ability to deliver
- 90 The consultation elicited a mixed response to devolution in Cheshire and Warrington, although compared to the other five devolution priority areas, Cheshire and Warrington scored more favourably across a number of questions. Importantly, while the survey response was mixed, Government remains satisfied that Cheshire and Warrington can continue to seek a devolution agreement.



- 91 **Next steps for communications and engagement:** Subject to approval of the three councils, the focus of the Cheshire and Warrington devolution communications and engagement plan will shift to focus on:
- (a) Engaging meaningfully on more detailed discussions about key themes and priorities of the combined authority. This will in-part be through facilitated group discussions and workshops, alongside public engagement more broadly to seek views and opinions on the key areas that devolution will support
 - (b) Helping to clarify what powers the CA will have “from day one” alongside what emerging priority themes and areas will be delivered via the CA in time
 - (c) Helping people to understand the governance around establishing the CA locally, but also ensuring people understand the “seat at the table” that an elected Mayor for Cheshire and Warrington would have nationally
 - (d) Listening to people’s views about where agreed funding as part of establishing the CA could be spent on
 - (e) Raising awareness of the Mayoral election planned for 2027

Implications and Comments

Legal implications

- 92 The Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority would be established in accordance with existing legislation, primarily being the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 (as amended) (‘2009 Act’).
- 93 Under s110(1)(b) of the 2009 Act, the Secretary of State may make an order establishing a combined authority only with the constituent councils’ consent.
- 94 The Governance workstream, including Monitoring Officers and legal services from each constituent council, have worked with Central Government civil servants to develop the draft Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Order 2026.



- 95 The proposed Shadow Board Terms of Reference have been drafted to align as far as possible with the statutory constitution in the Schedule to the draft Order.
- 96 Any powers in the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill that pass into legislation will be 'auto transferred' to the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority.
- 97 Each council report will contain a covering report clarifying any specific legal implications for that council.

Finance implications

- 98 The financial implications are set out within the main body of the report.
- 99 Each council report will contain a covering report to include any additional information subsequently received from the Government on the initial funding and investment package available to the Combined Authority. Where appropriate and required, each report will also clarify any specific financial implications for that council.

Risk implications and management

- 100 The report highlights programme risks and their mitigations. In particular, priority risks and mitigation include:
 - (a) **Rationale:** In a previous report to the Joint Committee (National Strategy: Update Report, 25th July 2025) it was noted that Government policy and funding is, on the whole, targeted to devolved areas – devolution is the default position across England. Not proceeding with devolution increases the risk that investment and support will not be forthcoming. I.e. there is an opportunity cost if devolution is not taken forward as investment will be prioritised to Combined Authority areas. Constituent councils will be central to the development of the policies and plans of the Combined Authority, ensuring that key priorities are embedded in future delivery. This will include alignment to council plans such as Local Development Plans, and specific priorities for Cheshire and Warrington, including transport and rural communities.
 - (b) **Timeline:** The overall programme timeline as part of the Devolution Priority Programme is a challenging one. However, key decision dates have been agreed at each Council to ensure that,



subject to decision, the timescales for the Parliamentary process to establish the Combined Authority can be met. Holding the mayoral election in 2027 also allows more time to prepare, supporting compliant and well-run election processes.

- (c) **Governance:** Much of the governance arrangements, including voting, will be statutory requirements as part of the Order to create the Combined Authority. These will be consistent to all Combined Authorities in England, minimising the risk of non-compliant governance processes. It should be noted that, to date, three Best Value notices have been issued to combined authorities (including the West of England, Cambridge and Peterborough and Tees Valley). These have been related to governance issues and, for Tees Valley, the way that a Mayoral Development Corporation was run. A future Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority will establish its own local constitution but will need to adhere to the statutory constitution set out as a Schedule to the Order.
- (d) As well as forming the Combined Authority Board, the three constituent councils in Cheshire and Warrington will form part of the overview and scrutiny as well as audit arrangements for the Combined Authority. The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 sets out the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee(s) of a Combined Authority. This will ensure a comprehensive oversight and scrutiny of the board and the mayor, including decisions made, actions taken, the discharge of general functions and the ability to make reports or recommendations to the board and the mayor on matters that effect the authority's area and residents.
- (e) Setting up a shadow board in advance of the creation of the Combined Authority will minimise the risk of not being ready for a 'go live' date in early 2026 once the Order to create the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority has passed through Parliament. It will oversee initial set-up, including initial staffing, governance readiness and shaping future values and principles.
- (f) **Financial governance:** Whilst it should be noted that the Statutory Instrument obliges the constituent councils to ensure that the Combined Authority can access the necessary funding to discharge its functions effectively, the constituent councils cannot be liable for any expenditure that the Combined Authority has not



agreed to. This risk to the constituent councils is also mitigated by the fact that the Combined Authority would set up with effective governance, a robust financial assurance framework and strong financial management. Key safeguards will include the establishment of an Audit Committee and a statutory Chief Financial Officer post (otherwise known as a Section 73 Officer). This post is similar in nature to a Council Section 151 officer and will have a legal responsibility to make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs, including establishing adequate controls and setting a balanced budget each year.

- (g) **Budget:** It is proposed that a small, strategic operating model is established from day one. Whilst a detailed funding and investment package is yet to be confirmed, using interim arrangements and supporting a 'minimum viable product' approach will mitigate against an untenable budget position.

- 101 The Cheshire and Warrington Mayoral Combined Authority would manage its own risk register. Statutory officers will have specific tasks to manage risk as part of overall operational management and performance.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 102 An Equality Analysis is attached at Appendix D.

Policy

- 103 The outline devolution agreement will support and better enables the achievement of Cheshire and Warrington's vision to be the healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive and growing economy in the UK.
- 104 Cheshire and Warrington sits within the Cheshire and Merseyside Marmot Region and all partners have recognised the impact that social, economic and environmental conditions have on health, particularly within our most deprived communities. Devolution will support subregional planning and delivery that better aligns to the 'All Together Fairer' strategy and that can affect health outcomes locally by focusing on improving the social determinants of health across Cheshire and Warrington.
- 105 All three constituent councils declared a climate emergency in 2019 and are working towards becoming net-zero councils within net-zero boroughs. Industrial, as well as domestic and transport emissions,



remain key contributors to carbon emissions across the sub-region. The outline devolution agreement brings significant opportunity to support and drive reduced emissions across those key sectors.

- 106 Stronger local decision making on subregional strategic planning and delivery will also support the delivery of the agreed strategic plans and priorities of each constituent council: the Our Cheshire East Plan 2025-29 vision of 'Enabling prosperity and wellbeing for all in Cheshire East'; the Cheshire West and Chester Borough Plan 2024-28 vision of 'A stronger future where we all play our part in thriving, caring and sustainable communities'; and the proposed Warrington Corporate Strategy 2025-29 vision of 'to shape a thriving Warrington by focusing on what matters most with three core focuses: our people, our place, and the quality of our public services.'
- 107 The attached EIA also gives a comprehensive overview of the wider policy alignment that devolution will impact upon.

Access to Information	
Contact Officer:	Gemma Davies, Chair, Cheshire and Warrington Devolution Steering Group/ Director Economy and Housing, Cheshire West and Chester Council Gemma.Davies@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
Appendices:	Appendix A: Summary of the Statutory Instrument and English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill. Appendix B: Cheshire and Warrington Shadow Board Draft Terms of Reference. Appendix C: Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee Amended terms of Reference. Appendix D: Equality Analysis Appendix E: Summary of local consultation and engagement
Background Papers:	National Strategy: Update Report (Joint Committee 25th July)

Appendix A – Summary Headlines

Statutory Instrument - Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Order 2026

What is the Statutory Instrument?

A Statutory Instrument (SI) is a form of secondary legislation.

It outlines changes to existing legislation without needing to create a new Act.

The SI will then form the ‘Order’ which establishes the rules and procedures that govern how the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority (C&W CA) will operate as a public body.

When the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill (EDB) becomes an Act, these additional functions will apply to what will then be the Cheshire and Warrington Mayoral Strategic Authority (C&W MSA).

What does it do and when will it come into force?

It clarifies that Cheshire and Warrington have met the statutory tests – and that establishing the C&W CA will likely improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of people who live and work in the area.

It is reliant on all three councils in Cheshire and Warrington giving their consent to establishing the creation of the C&W CA.

Subject to consent and the parliamentary process to make the Order, the C&W CA would come into force on the day after the Order is made.

The table below sets out some key elements within the Order:

The Mayor

- Mayoral election date to be confirmed and set out in the Order
- To take place every 4 years
- The mayoral term of office commences 4 days after the day of the election (or nearest working day)
- The mayor may appoint a political advisor who will be employed only as long as the mayor is in office. This would be a politically restricted post.
- Functions set out below.

Governance

- As part of the SI, a statutory constitution is included as a schedule to the Order.
- Whilst C&W can add a local constitution with additional bespoke sections, it must maintain the following core governance arrangements.
- The SI confirms the following:

Membership:

- 2 x elected members from each constituent council
- Each member to have 1 named substitute

Chair/Vice-Chair:

- The mayor will be the chair of the C&W CA.
- Before the mayor is elected, the C&W CA will appoint a chair and vice-chair from the constituent council members
- No meeting can happen without the chair or vice chair present

***Non-constituent and associate members:**

- A maximum of 6 (no obligation to appoint the maximum)
- Non-constituent bodies must nominate a member and named substitute
- Associate members must nominate a named substitute

**Non-constituent: Representatives of an organisation (e.g. PCC/VCFSE/NHS)*

Associate: Named individual

Decision-Making

- **Simple majority** of the members present (*pre-May 2027 mayoral election*)
- **Simple majority plus mayor** or deputy mayor (*post-May 2027 mayoral election*)
- **Before the mayor's term of office**, no business can be conducted unless the chair or vice-chair and at least 3 members appointed by the constituent councils are present.
- **After the mayor begins in office**, no business can be conducted unless the mayor (or deputy mayor) and at least 4 members appointed by the constituent councils are present.
- **A member of the C&W CA will be the deputy mayor.** If a member is acting in this capacity, they can bring in their substitute.
- **No member has a casting vote.** Tied votes are not carried.
- **Before the mayoral election**, specific mayoral functions will be conferred on the MCA. As soon as the mayor's term of office begins, they will transfer to the mayor:
 - Development of a Local Transport Plan
 - The power to pay (transport) grant
 - General powers of competence

Day 1 Functions

- **The same functions as constituent councils to deliver economic development and regeneration.** (*These powers/functions will run concurrently with councils*).
- **Transport:**
 - The C&W CA will become the **Local Transport Authority** for Cheshire and Warrington.
 - This will be established via a **1-year transition period** (from the date that the C&W CA is established by the Order). After the transition period, the exercise of this function will be exercisable by the C&W CA only.

- The C&W CA will be responsible for the development of the Local Transport Plan. This requires the local transport authority to develop policies for the promotion and encouragement of safe, integrated, efficient and economic transport to, from and within their area, and to implement those policies.
- The Local Transport Grant for C&W will come via the C&W CA.
- The C&W CA will be responsible for **passenger transport** as the local transport authority:
 - This places a duty on the local transport authority to identify public passenger transport needs that would not be met on a purely commercial basis i.e. without local transport authority intervention.
 - The local transport authority has the power to tender and enter agreements with providers for subsidised services. The local transport authority will also become by default the franchising authority.
 - There will be a permanent concurrent arrangement where a constituent council already runs its own municipal bus company. This is the case for WBC.
 - The C&W CA can pay grants to anyone in respect of the running of transport facilities and services as well as bus services but must seek consent from each constituent council whose area those functions are proposed to be exercised.
 - Concessionary fares process and permits.
- **Constituent councils remain as the highways authority for their area.**

Decisions about funding and budgets

- Constituent councils must ensure that C&W CA costs are aligned to the exercise of its functions.
- Constituent councils must meet reasonable costs of the Combined Authority and/or mayoral functions if they are not funded via the resources of the C&W CA (including any precept). All mayoral costs must first be agreed by the C&W CA. The mayor cannot incur any expenditure unless agreed by the C&W CA.
- Constituent councils cannot be liable for any expenditure, unless the Combined Authority has approved such a request in accordance with its budget decision-making processes (either as per the Finance Order 2017 for mayoral budget or simple majority including the mayor for Combined Authority budget).

- The C&W CA must establish an Audit Committee and a statutory Chief Financial Officer post (otherwise known as a Section 73 Officer).

The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill

What will it mean for C&W devolution?

What does the Bill do?

1. The Bill seeks to describe a consistent approach to devolution structures – and as far as possible gives increased consistency to new and existing governance arrangements.
2. It outlines and expands powers for Mayors and authorities
3. It explains the routes to get further devolved powers over time

Structures

The Bill will create in law a new category of authority in England – the ‘**Strategic Authority**’, the aim of which is to ‘make it quicker and easier to devolve powers away from Westminster to local government’. This will replace the term ‘Combined Authority’ once the Bill becomes legislation.

Each Strategic Authority would belong to one of the levels of devolution outlined

1. Foundation Strategic Authority (non-mayoral)
2. Mayoral Strategic Authority (C&W ‘day 1’ – an MSA)

3. Established Mayoral (A Mayoral Strategic Authority with additional governance requirements that enable greater flexibilities across devolved powers and investment. New Mayoral Strategic Authorities can become established after 18 months in operations if they meet these requirements).

Devolution Framework

- The Bill sets out a clear framework with a standardised set of legal powers, governance arrangements, funding commitments and partnership/collaboration arrangements with government.
- It is a clear move away from negotiated deals/ and inconsistencies across devolved areas.
- This is already reflected in the C&W statutory constitution within the SI.
- The Bill also:
 - Creates the power to extend the framework. i.e. there will be more powers that will be devolved over time (e.g. DEFRA and other Departments who are somewhat 'silent' on devolution at this time).
 - The power to 'pilot' new powers for specific MSAs.
 - Established MSAs will have a 'right to request' new powers.

Operation of the MSA

- Constituent council members can be paid by the MSA. Levels of pay will be determined by the MSAs independent remuneration panel that will need to be established.
- Mayors will be able to appoint and remunerate 'Commissioners' to lead on MSA areas of competence. They will not be members of the MSA.

- The post of mayor cannot also hold a position as a Member of Parliament.
- If mayors decide to raise a precept, it must be specific. The Bill extends the range of functions a precept can be used for to all MSA functions.
- A supplementary vote system will be used for mayoral elections.

Overview of devolution functions and powers within the Bill

The table below sets out the functions and power within the Bill that would transfer to a C&W MSA once legislation is in place (anticipated in 2026).

<p>Transport & local infrastructure</p> <p>In addition to the powers and functions under the Order...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ MSAs will be required to set up and coordinate Key Route Networks (KRN) (oversight of most important local roads) ➤ Mayors will hold a ‘Power of Direction’ over councils’ use of local highway and traffic powers on the KRN to deliver against the agreed LTP. ➤ Mayors will have a legal power to set Traffic Reduction Targets on the KRN. ➤ The MSA can regulate on-street micromobility schemes through a licensing regime (e.g. e-bikes). ➤ MSAs can apply to take on Penalty Charge Notices powers (as long as they have the consent of their constituent councils). ➤ Additionally (not in the Bill but via other legislation) - The mayor will have a statutory role in governing, managing, planning and developing the rail network and local rail stations
<p>Skills & employment support</p>

- The Bill will transfer adult education functions to MSAs, including the devolution of the Adult Skills Fund (19+).
- This funding will be non-ringfenced which means the MSA can determine how best to use the fund via the creation of a Local Skills Plan.
- Devolution of the 'supported employment funding' to support those furthest from employment to find and sustain a job.

Housing & strategic planning

- The Bill will give mayors new planning powers similar to those exercised by the Mayor of London. Including:
- Publish a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) setting out the vision for development across C&W. Once this is agreed and in place, the mayor will then have...
 - The ability to direct refusal of planning applications of potential strategic importance
 - The ability 'call in ' these sort of applications
 - The option to charge a Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy on new developments to support infrastructure requirements. (Any CIL charging schedule will need a majority agreement from the constituent council).
- Mayors will also be able to prepare Mayoral Development Orders (MDO) – which streamlines planning permission processes. Any MDO must be consulted with and approved by the relevant local planning authority.
- And... designate a Mayoral Development Area and establish a Mayoral Development Corporation to support delivery of large, complex development and regeneration projects.

Economic growth & regeneration

- A statutory duty to develop a Local Growth Plan which will also outline shared priorities with Government and an investment pipeline.
- There will be a legal responsibility for certain public organisations to 'have regard' to the shared priorities of the Local Growth Plan.
- The Bill will require MSAs to work with the LGPS to jointly invest in local projects which deliver social and/or economic benefits to our local communities (as well as financial return).

Environment & Climate Change
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Bill does not transfer statutory environmental or climate-related functions to Strategic Authorities, but it gives the responsibility for the development and delivery of Local Nature Recovery Strategies and does commit to explore future opportunities for devolution in this area
Health, wellbeing and public safety
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ MSAs will have a legal requirement to ‘have regard’ to the need to reduce health inequality in C&W and improve people’s health in the area. Health impacts should be considered in all policies of the MSA. ➤ The mayor in C&W will not be responsible for exercising police functions.

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Appendix B

Cheshire & Warrington Combined Authority Shadow Board

Terms of Reference

The purpose of the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Shadow Board is to provide a strategic direction and a forum to make arrangements in the best interest of the establishment of the new Cheshire & Warrington Combined Authority.

1. Interpretation

In these Terms of Reference:

“Constituent Councils” means Cheshire East Borough Council, Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council and Warrington Borough Council

“Constituent Member” means the elected members of the constituent councils appointed to the Shadow Board as set out in these Terms of Reference including Substitutes where relevant.

“Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Board” means the formal board for the newly created Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority on its commencement

“Shadow Board” means this joint committee for the shadow arrangement for the future Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority

2. Constituent Membership

2.1. Membership of the Shadow Board will be the following elected members from the Constituent Councils:

- Leader and Deputy Leader of Cheshire East Borough Council
- Leader and Deputy Leader of Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council
- Leader and Deputy Leader of Warrington Borough Council

3. Substitutes

3.1. A substitute may be nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Constituent Member and the substitute member shall have full voting rights where the member for whom they are substituting does not attend.

3.2. The substitute must be nominated in accordance with the constitutional arrangements operated by each body represented on the Shadow Board, and the details notified to the clerk 2 clear working days in advance of the meeting, where possible.

4. Non-constituent members and Associate members

4.1. The Shadow Board may appoint by majority agreement other members onto the Shadow Board as they see fit to achieve the business of the Shadow Board.

4.2. Non-constituent members and associate members shall have no voting rights.

5. Chairing

5.1. The Shadow Board will appoint a Chair and a Vice Chair of the Shadow Board to conduct the meetings.

6. Decision making

6.1. The Shadow Board has decision-making powers to the extent delegated from the Constituent Councils in accordance with their own processes and as set out in these Terms of Reference for the purpose of establishing the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority and providing strategic direction for devolution in Cheshire and Warrington.

6.2. No business is to be transacted at a meeting of the Shadow Board unless the Chair or Vice-Chair acting in place of the Chair and three Constituent Members appointed by the Constituent Councils are present.

6.3. Matters are to be decided by simple majority, with each of the Constituent Members having one vote.

6.4. If a vote is tied on any matter, it is deemed not to have been carried.

7. Meeting frequency and location

7.1. Meetings will be monthly, or as otherwise agreed by the Shadow Board.

7.2. Meetings will take place at the offices of one of the Constituent Councils, or a location agreed by the Shadow Board. If a meeting is non-decision making, it may be held as a virtual meeting.

7.3. Agendas will be published 5 clear working days before the meeting, but if matters need to be urgently referred to the Shadow Board this requirement may be waived by agreement of the Chair.

7.4. The meeting will be open to the public in accordance with s100A Local Government Act 1972 and administered accordingly.

7.5. The public may be excluded from a meeting during an item whenever it is likely, in view of the nature of the item that, if members of the public were present during that item, confidential information as defined in section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 or exempt information as defined in Sch12A of the Local Government Act 1972 would be disclosed to them.

8. Officers

8.1. The Shadow Board will be supported by the Chief Executives of the Constituent Councils, and/or their representatives, as appropriate.

8.2. Meeting support and administration will be provided by Cheshire West Borough Council.

9. Roles & functions

9.1. The role of the Shadow Board is to act in the best interests of the new Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority and, in so doing,:

9.1.1. to oversee the development and creation of the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority;

9.1.2. to develop proposals and arrangements to deliver effective devolution in Cheshire as part of central government's Devolution Priority Programme and to engage with central government on matters related to devolution;

9.1.3. to engage with stakeholders in accordance with the Cheshire and Warrington devolution programme engagement plan;

9.1.4. to propose any governance structure, local constitutional arrangements, and assurance framework for the new Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority and either obtain relevant approval in principle of the same from the Constituent Councils or, where appropriate, recommend to the newly established Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Board for approval on its commencement;

- 9.1.5. to ensure that interim staffing arrangements are in place for the commencement of the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority to meet any statutory requirements;
- 9.1.6. to agree the Combined Authority Returning Officer and related election arrangements and recommend to the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority Board for approval on its commencement;
- 9.1.7. to make decisions on any funding that may be awarded prior to the formal establishment of the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority;
- 9.1.8. to provide a coherent single position on major strategic issues across the region;
- 9.1.9. to receive reports from the Business Advisory Board and Devolution Steering Group;
- 9.1.10. to oversee the delivery of the in-year capital schemes agreed with central government within the devolution deal;
- 9.1.11. to review, agree and effect proposed changes to the functions of the Shadow Board where appropriate;
- 9.1.12. any other such functions as are necessary to meet the statutory requirements to establish the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority in accordance with the legislation and central government's Devolution Priority Programme.

Appendix C

CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON JOINT COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE (AS AMENDED)

1. Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council and Warrington Council have established an Executive Joint Committee known as the Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee ('the Committee') for the purpose of discharging the functions mentioned in Annex A. The Councils are enabled to set up Joint Committees under Part VI of the Local Government Act 1972 and Part I Chapter 2 of the Local Government Act 2000.

2. Each Council is entitled to appoint one voting member in respect of the business to be carried out in Part One of Appendix A (Subscriber Members), and one further voting member in respect of the business to be carried out in Part Two of Appendix A (Joint Committee Members). In the event of a voting member of the Committee ceasing to be a member of the Council which appointed him/her, the Council shall forthwith appoint another voting member in his/her place. Only a voting member is entitled to be elected as Chair or Vice-Chair of the Committee.

3. Each Council may appoint members as substitute for the members appointed under (i) above to attend meetings of the Committee in the absence for any reason of the members appointed under (i) above, in accordance with their own constitutional requirements. The substitute members shall be treated in all respects if they were appointed under (i) above.

4. The Chair of the Business Advisory Board ('BAB') shall be an ex officio member of the Committee and may speak at meetings of the Committee but not vote. The Chair of the Business Advisory Board may present reports to the Committee from the BAB.

5. The Committee shall maintain a two-year rolling Chair and Vice-Chair from among the Subscriber Members. The Chair will rotate every two years in the following order CWaC (until May 2025), CEC (until May 2027) WBC (until May 2029) and shall continue in that rotation. The Vice-Chair shall be from CEC (until May 2025) and shall rotate in the same order as the chairmanship every two years.

6. Three voting members of the Committee shall constitute a quorum for the business set out in Part One of Appendix A. Four voting members shall constitute a quorum for the business set out in Part Two of Appendix A. Except as otherwise provided by statute, all questions shall be decided by a majority of the votes of the voting members present, the Chair having the casting vote in addition to his/her vote as a member of the Committee.

7. The Committee shall meet as agreed at its AGM and at least three times each year. However, a meeting of the Committee may be convened at any time by the Committee Clerk in consultation with the Chair. A meeting of the Committee must also be convened by the Chair within 28 days of the receipt of a requisition of any two Subscriber Members of the Committee addressed to the Committee Clerk. The Chair of the Board may request a meeting of the Committee by notice in writing addressed to the Committee Clerk, but may not requisition one. All requisitions shall be in writing and no business other than that specified in the requisition shall be transacted at such a meeting.

8. The Committee shall adopt the standing orders of Cheshire East Council but it may agree to vary these and from time to time make such standing orders for the carrying on of the business of the Committee as the Committee shall deem necessary and or desirable.

9. For the avoidance of doubt and subject to there being no changes to the law on this issue, where a Council is operating executive arrangements pursuant to the Local Government Act 2000 (and any regulations made under it), it will be a matter for the Executive of the Council to appoint any voting member, or substitute member of the Committee as long as that member is a member of the appointing Councils Cabinet. Where a Council is operating committee system arrangements pursuant to the Local Government Act 2000, it will be a matter for the Council to appoint any voting member and substitute member to the Joint Committee.

10. The Committee shall from time to time appoint such sub-committees to consider and deal with any of the functions of the Committee as may be thought desirable.

11. The Committee Clerk and such other officers as may be deemed necessary for the due conduct of the business of the Committee shall be provided by Cheshire East Council and the costs of this shall be met by the Council-owned company (Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington – NB: name subject to Member approval).

12. The first meeting of the Committee shall be held at Cheshire East Council and the venue shall then rotate between the Councils in alphabetical order, unless otherwise directed by the Committee.

13. As and when required by an Overview and Scrutiny Committee or other Committee or an Audit Committee of any of the Councils, the Subscriber Member for the Council whose Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Committee or Audit Committee has instigated an investigation shall take the lead responsibility for accounting for the activities of the Committee to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee or Committee or Audit Committee and shall attend such meetings of those committees of its Council as necessary, and no other member of the Committee shall be required to attend.

14. The Committee Clerk shall:

a. Be responsible for preparing the agenda and submitting reports prepared by either the Councils or other bodies to the Committee and minutes of the Committee.

b. Be responsible for making arrangements for publishing in accordance with Access to Information requirements all meetings, agenda, agenda items and minutes as appropriate.

15. The relevant Standing Orders for the Committee are those of Cheshire East Council.

16. In the event that an urgent decision is needed for the discharge of any of the functions of this Committee, other than those functions which by law can be discharged only by the Councils or a specific Committee, then the Growth Director of each Council is entitled to act on behalf of the Committee. A decision will be urgent where any delay would seriously prejudice the legal or financial position of the Councils or the interests of residents. This delegation is subject to the conditions that any urgent action:-

(a) should be reported to the Committee

(b) shall take the advice of the Monitoring Officer and S151 officer of each Council

(c) shall be exercised in consultation with the three Subscriber members of the Committee

(d) shall be exercised within each Council's own financial and other constitutional requirement

Part One - Shareholder Functions of the Committee

1. To approve the business plan and budget of LEPCo/Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington (ECW) and any required variations

2. Ensuring that LEPCo/ ECW deliver against their business plan and budget, holding them to account for such delivery and directing the LEPCO/ECW Board to take remedial action where necessary;

3. To appoint directors to the LEPCo/ECW Board

4. To approve any capital expenditure to be made in excess of £100k unless agreed under the business plan
5. To approve the entering into of any lease or licence for the occupation of land or premises
6. To approve the appointment of members of LEPCo/ECW management team
7. To approve the entering into of any contract in excess of £100k unless agreed under the Business Plan
8. To approve the entering into or giving of any loan, guarantee, surety or indemnity by LEPCo/ECW other than the giving of grant by LEPCo/ECW as part of its business plan
9. To approve the opening or closing of any bank account by the Company
10. To approve any changes to the Articles of Association of the Company
11. To approve any staffing or other material policy changes or new policies to be implemented

Part Two - Other Functions of the Committee

1. To receive reports from the Business Advisory Board, any Sub Committee of the Joint Committee and the Growth Directors (management) Group.
2. Any time review and agree proposed changes to the Functions of the Committee and seek approval of the same from the three Councils.
3. To agree and approve any proposed governance and or reporting structure that the Committee sees fit.

Equality Analysis (EA) Form

(formally known as Equality Impact Assessment)



Appendix D

Cheshire+
Warrington

This is an equality analysis of the proposal for the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority and associated devolution deal.

Sections in this form:

Section 1 – Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function or procedure

Section 2 - Information – What do you know?

Section 3 – Who will be affected?

Section 4 – Consultation and engagement

Section 5 – Equality analysis

Section 6 – Justification, Mitigation and Actions

Section 7 – Monitoring and review

Section 8 – Help and support

This form has been completed in conjunction with reading the EA Guidance from each Council. For more information on EA's, please see the links below.

- Cheshire East Council - [Equality Analysis Impact Assessments](#)
- Cheshire West and Chester Council - [Equality Analysis | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)
- Warrington Borough Council - [Equality, diversity and inclusion | warrington.gov.uk](#)

Section 1 – Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function, or procedure

Title of the EA	Devolution – The set up of the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority
Assessment lead officer	Gemma Davies (Growth Director, Cheshire West and Chester Council)
Councils	Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council & Warrington Borough Council
Date of assessment	August 2025
Details of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function, or procedure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of the service, strategy, function, or procedure <p>Cheshire and Warrington has been selected by government as one of six areas in England included within its Devolution Priority Programme (DPP). Part of the government's commitment to expanding devolution to all parts of England – as set out in its 2024 Devolution White Paper – the DPP identifies those areas that could form the next wave of strategic mayoral authorities, benefitting from similar devolved powers and investment to the 15 mayoral authorities already established. Subject to statutory consultation, ratification by individual councils, and the laying of an Order in Parliament, this could see the first Mayor for Cheshire and Warrington elected by residents in May 2027.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose or aim. <p>Devolution for Cheshire and Warrington would mean shifting additional powers and funding from central government– enabling local decision-making on various priority areas including transport, business growth, employment and skills and regeneration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why is the service/strategy/function/procedure being commissioned/changed/decommissioned? <p>Devolution is about national government transferring powers and resources away from central government departments into regions. The establishment of Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority would be to facilitate this transition. In</p>

	<p>an announcement made on Thursday 17 July 2025, the government confirmed that Cheshire and Warrington had passed the necessary statutory tests for devolution in the area, subject to the Council's consent.</p>
<p>Links and impact on other services, strategies, functions, or procedures.</p>	<p>Does the proposal link to other areas of the council's work? Could the proposal impact on other services, functions, or procedures?</p> <p>Cheshire East Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devolution meets Cheshire East's vision about enabling prosperity and wellbeing for all in Cheshire East. It furthers support to the three commitments made by Cheshire East which include unlocking prosperity for all, improving health and wellbeing and being an effective and enabling council Cheshire East Plan 2025-29 Devolution supports the delivery of the The Joint Local Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the population of Cheshire East 2023 - 2028 by meeting these visions which include: engaging effectively with the public, enabling people to be happier, healthier, and independent for longer, supporting people to take personal responsibility and make good lifestyle choices, achieving evidence-based outcomes within a holistic vision of health and wellbeing. <p>Cheshire West and Chester Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devolution supports Cheshire West and Chester's Borough Plan, which has 6 missions: Starting well, Tackling hardship and poverty, Resilient people living their best lives, Opportunity in a fair local economy, Neighbourhood pride & Greener communities. Borough Plan 2024-2028 Devolution links in with the Place Plan which is also known as the borough's statutory Health and Wellbeing Strategy. It sets out an ambition to achieve excellence and sustainability in the future to improve the health and wellbeing of residents living in our borough. Cheshire West and Chester Place Plan 2019-2026 (Pubn 1.4.25) Cheshire West and Chester Council also have the West Cheshire Inclusive Economy Action Plan - https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/asset-library/west-cheshire-inclusive-economy-prospectus-july2295.pdf <p>Warrington Borough Council</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devolution aligns with the Council's Corporate Strategy 2022-2024, supporting priorities such as tackling poverty and helping those in greatest need, building empowered, resilient and independent communities, and creating a place that provides opportunity for all. Devolution supports the delivery of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2028 by improving equity of access to advice and support and helping address inequalities in areas such as employment and housing.

- Devolution will make a significant contribution to Warrington Borough Council's strategic objectives, particularly in improving health and wellbeing - [Living Well in Warrington Health and Wellbeing Strategy](#)

Further Context and Information

- **English Devolution Bill** - The English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill will deliver on the government's commitment to widen and deepen devolution across England, providing Mayors with unprecedented powers to deliver growth. The Bill will support the government's plan to rebuild and reform local government, as the foundation for devolution, and give communities stronger tools to shape their local areas. [English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill - GOV.UK](#)
- **Joint Committee** - The Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee is an executive body formed by Cheshire East Council, Cheshire West and Chester Council, and Warrington Borough Council. [Key Documents - Cheshire and Warrington Devolution](#)
- **Cheshire and Warrington: Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Strategy** – Cheshire and Warrington Local Authorities and Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington are working on a strategy which sets out to deliver our ambitions to be the UK's healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive and fastest-growing economy by 2045. [Cheshire and Warrington Sustainable & Inclusive Economic Strategy - Consultation June - early July 2025 - Cheshire and Warrington](#)

Subject to Council's consent, the Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority would bring additional powers and resources to the local area, which are likely to impact on a broad range of services, strategies, functions, or procedures.

Section 2 - Information – What do you know?

<p>What do you know?</p>	<p>What information (qualitative and quantitative) and/or research have you used to arrive at the decision to commission/ change/ decommission the service, strategy, function, or procedure?</p> <p>Devolution is a priority of National Government, Cheshire and Warrington have worked together successfully as a sub region for many years and were selected to be part of the Devolution Priority Programme in 2025. Much of the research conducted locally has been through significant local engagement (see section 4 below) and the statutory consultation.</p> <p>On 11th June 2025 the Government concluded their multi-year Spending Review. As well as outlining the focus for Government investment for both departmental budgets to 2029 and capital investment to 2030, the Review was also a trigger for key national strategies including the Modern Industrial Strategy and 10-Year Infrastructure Strategy. Together these form a suite of key drivers to deliver on the Government’s ‘Plan for Change’ – with a specific focus on “kick-starting economic growth”. It should be noted that a number of other strategies are due to be released later in the year, including business support and skills.</p> <p>A key mechanism underpinning ‘Plan for Change’ is the Government’s continued commitment to “widen and deepen devolution across England... to deliver growth”. July 2025 saw the introduction of the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill to Parliament.</p>
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Section 3 – Who will be affected?

<p>Include details of all those affected by the proposal, in some cases, this could be all Cheshire and Warrington residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information on Cheshire East’s population can be found here: Current Facts and Figures and Insight Cheshire East Information on Cheshire West and Chester’s population can be found Datasets and statistics and Insight and Intelligence Cheshire West and Chester Council Information on Warrington’s population can be found here: Insight and intelligence, this includes ward demographics. Information by protected characteristic on Warrington’s residents can be found in the Public Sector Equality Duty Report.
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Protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010 and other areas that may be impacted	
Age e.g. children, older people etc	<p><i>Source: Mid-year 2024 population estimates, Office for National Statistics</i></p> <p>Cheshire East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0-15 years: 73,497 (17.4%) 16-64 years: 252,888 (60.0%) 65+ years: 94,913 (22.5%) - higher than England (18.7%). <p>Cheshire West and Chester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0-15 years: 63,122 (17.0%) 16-64 years: 228,247 (61.4%) 65+ years: 80,283 (21.6%) – higher than the England average (18.7%) <p>Warrington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0-15 years: 39,473 (18.3%) 16-64 years: 133,233 (61.9%) 65+ years: 42,685 (19.8%) – higher than the England average (18.4%)
Carers ¹	<p><i>Source: ONS Census Data (2021)</i></p> <p>Cheshire East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 90.9% (344,383) of the population provide no unpaid care 4.9% (18,703) of the population provide 19 hours or less per week of unpaid care

¹ A **carer** is anyone, including children and adults who provides unpaid care for a family member, partner or friend who needs help because of their illness, frailty, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support. The Equality Act 2010 protects carers against direct discrimination or harassment because of their caring responsibilities this is called “discrimination by association”.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1.6% (6,138) of the population provide 20 to 49 hours per week of unpaid care • 2.5% (9,615) of the population provide 50 or more hours per week of unpaid care <p>Cheshire West and Chester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90.4% (306,894) of the population provide no unpaid care • 4.8% (16,421) of the population provide 19 hours or less per week of unpaid care • 1.9% (6,312) of the population provide 20 to 49 hours per week of unpaid care • 2.9% (9,905) of the population provide 50 or more hours per week of unpaid care <p>Warrington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90.5% (181,242) of the population provide no unpaid care • 4.9% (9,837) of the population provide 19 hours or less per week of unpaid care • 1.9% (3,801) of the population provide 20 to 49 hours per week of unpaid care • 2.7% (5,461) of the population provide 50 or more hours per week of unpaid care
Care experience as a child or young person and care leavers ¹	<p><i>Source: Education statistics at gov.uk</i></p> <p>Cheshire East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 542 Children in the Council's care (March 2024) • 187 care leavers aged 22-25 supported by the Council (2024) <p>Cheshire West and Chester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 570 Children in the Council's care (March 2024) • 210 care leavers aged 22-25 supported by the Council (2024)

¹ **Experience of the care system as a child or young person** – This refers to people who have spent time living with foster carers under local authority care, in residential care (e.g., a children's home) or in kinship care with relatives or friends as a child or young person. A **care leaver** is a young person aged 16-25 years old who has been 'looked after' at some point since they were 14 years old, were in care on or after their 16th birthday. The [Independent Review of Children's Social Care](#) highlighted the significant levels of discrimination and disadvantage faced by care experienced people. In January 2024 this Council decided to treat "care experience" as if it were a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010".

	<p>Warrington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 345 Children in the Council's care (March 2024) • 149 care leavers aged 22-25 supported by the Council (2024)
<p>Disability (as defined by the Equality Act - a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities)</p>	<p><i>Source: ONS Census Data (2021) – For comparison, England (17.8%), North West at (19.8%)</i></p> <p>Cheshire East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17.3% (67,819) of residents have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 <p>Cheshire West and Chester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18.5% (65,897) of residents have a disability under the Equality Act 2010 <p>Warrington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17.3% (37,266) of residents have a disability under the Equality Act 2010
<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<p><i>Source: ONS Census Data (2021)</i></p> <p>Cheshire East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 675 (0.2%) of resident's gender identity is different to that assigned at birth. <p>Cheshire West and Chester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 389 (0.1%) of resident's gender identity is different to that assigned at birth. <p>Warrington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 273 (0.2%) of resident's gender identity is different to that assigned at birth.
<p>Neurodivergent conditions¹</p>	<p><i>Source: (Year group, by type of SEN provision and type of need - 2016 to 2025 DofE)</i></p>

¹ **Neuro divergent conditions** include Autism/Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Dyspraxia Dyslexia, as well as many other conditions.

	<p>Cheshire East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2024/5 there were 1,293 children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder <p>Cheshire West and Chester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2024/5 there were 1,383 children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder <p>Warrington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In 2024/2025 there were 741 children with Autistic Spectrum disorder
Pregnancy and maternity	<p><i>Source: Live births in England and Wales: birth rates down to local authority areas, ONS Crown Copyright</i></p> <p>Cheshire East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3,615 live births in 2024 <p>Cheshire West and Chester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3,032 live births in 2024 <p>Warrington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1,763 live births in 2024
Race/ethnicity (including Gypsies and Travellers, refugees, asylum seekers etc.)	<p><i>Source: ONS Census Data (2021)</i></p> <p>Cheshire East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5.66% of people identified their ethnic group as 'non-white', this includes 1.8% who identified as 'mixed or multiple'. <p>Cheshire West and Chester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.7% of people identified their ethnic group as 'non-white', this includes 1.5% who identified as 'mixed or multiple'.

	<p>Warrington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6.5% of people identified their ethnic group as 'non-white', this includes 1.6% who identified as 'mixed or multiple'.
Religion or belief (including lack of belief)	<p><i>Source: ONS Census Data (2021)</i></p> <p>Cheshire East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No religion – 150,257 (37.7% of the population) • Christian -216,629 (54.3% of the population) • Buddhist -1,314 (0.3% of the population) • Hindu -2,046 (0.5% of the population) • Jewish – 640 (0.2% of the population) • Muslim – 4,140 (1.0% of the population) • Sikh – 371, (0.1% of the population) • Other religion –1,558 (0.4% of the population) <p>Cheshire West and Chester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No religion – 135,025 (37.8% of the population) • Christian -194,705 (54.5% of the population) • Buddhist -1,074 (0.3% of the population) • Hindu -1,551 (0.4% of the population) • Jewish – 288 (0.1% of the population) • Muslim – 3,506 (1.0% of the population) • Sikh - 251 (0.1% of the population) • Other religion –1,238 (0.3% of the population) <p>Warrington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No religion - 73,042 (34.6% of the population). • Christian - 119,650 (56.7% of the population) • Buddhist - 605 (0.3% of the population)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hindu - 1,495 (0.7% of the population) • Jewish - 190 (0.1% of the population) • Muslim - 3,686 (1.7% of the population) • Sikh - 478 (0.2% of the population) • Other religion – 794 (0.4 of the population)
Sex	<p><i>Source: Mid-Year Population Estimates, England and Wales, June 2024 (ONS)</i></p> <p>Cheshire East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49.0% of the population of Cheshire East are male and 51.0% of the population are female. <p>Cheshire West and Chester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 48.9% of the population of Cheshire West and Chester are male and 51.1% of the population are female. <p>Warrington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 49.4% of the population of Warrington are male and 50.6% of the population are female.
Sexual orientation	<p><i>Source: ONS Census Data (2021)</i></p> <p>Cheshire East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •LGB - 8,102 people • Straight or Heterosexual - 301,391 (91.5%) <p>Cheshire West and Chester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •LGB - 8,313 people • Straight or Heterosexual - 269,319 (91.2%) <p>Warrington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •LGB - 4,349 people • Straight or Heterosexual - 158,539 (91.8%)

<p>Marriage and civil partnership</p>	<p><i>Source: ONS Census Data (2021)</i></p> <p>Cheshire East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 31.6% of Cheshire East residents have never married and never registered a civil partnership • 49.7% are married/ civil partnership <p>Cheshire West and Chester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34.9% of Cheshire West and Chester residents have never married and never registered a civil partnership • 46.9% are married/ civil partnership <p>Warrington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 34.9% of Warrington residents have never married and never registered a civil partnership • 46.8% are married/ civil partnership
<p>Rural communities</p>	<p>Rurality is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010. In 2001, 23.3% of people lived in rural areas with the combined authority area. In 2025, ONS have re-defined rural areas and categorised this into sub-definitions to take account for proximity to larger centres with services and amenities, as well as taking into account edge of settlement housing developments. An accurate residential count is not available at this time.</p>
<p>Areas of deprivation (include any impact on people living in poverty who may not live in areas identified as deprived)</p>	<p>Areas of Deprivation is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Cheshire East</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 34,183 (8%) residents in Cheshire East living in neighbourhoods in Quintile 1 of the IMD 2019. • 9.7% (17,506) of households in the borough are living in fuel poverty • 15.2% (11,024) of children aged under 16 in Cheshire East were living in low-income families in 2023/24. (DWP) <p>Cheshire West and Chester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 55,555 (15.4%) residents in Cheshire West and Chester living in neighbourhoods in Quintile 1 of the IMD 2019.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11.4% (18,147) of households in the borough are living in fuel poverty • 17.8% (11,164) of children aged under 16 in Cheshire West and Chester were living in low-income families in 2023/24. (DWP) <p>Warrington</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 39,407 (19%) residents in Warrington living in neighbourhoods in Quintile 1 of the IMD. • 9% (8,380) of households in the borough are living in fuel poverty • 17.6% (6,898) of children aged under 16 in Warrington were living in low-income families in 2023/24. (DWP)
Human rights	<p>The key Human Rights principles are: right to life; prohibition of torture; prohibition of slavery and forced labour; right to liberty and security; right to a fair trial; no punishment without law; right to respect for private and family life; freedom of thought, conscience and religion; freedom of expression; freedom of assembly and association; right to marry; prohibition of discrimination; protection of property; right to education; right to free election</p>
<p>Health and wellbeing and Health Inequalities (consider the wider determinants of health such as education, housing, employment, environment, crime and transport, plus impacts on lifestyles and effects on health and care services)</p>	<p>Health and Wellbeing and Health Inequalities is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>Combined Cheshire data (at new combined authority geography)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Male life expectancy at birth 79.5 at birth, (significantly higher than England – 79.1) - Calculated using ONS LA mid-year population estimates 2021-2023 and ONS LA death registrations 2021-2023 • Female life expectancy at birth 83.3 at birth, (Higher but not statistically significantly different to England – 83.0) - Calculated using ONS LA mid-year population estimates 2021-2023 and ONS LA death registrations 2021-2023 • Gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived communities female 8.8 years -life expectancy between the most and least deprived communities' (Slope index of inequality) 2021-2023 • Gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived communities male 11.7 years -life expectancy between the most and least deprived communities' (Slope index of inequality) 2021-2023 • Adult smoking prevalence 9.6% - Source: Office for National Statistics (ONS), Annual Population survey(APS) (18+) (3-year range)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception children excess weight and obesity prevalence 21.4% - Source: NHS England (NHSE), National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) (3-year range) • Year 6 children excess weight and obesity prevalence 33.9% -Source: NHS England (NHSE), National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) (3-year range)
Procurement/partnership (if project due to be carried out by contractors/partners etc, identify steps taken to ensure equality compliance)	Not Applicable.

Section 4 – Consultation and Engagement?

Details and date of the consultation/s and/or engagement activities	<p>Please include details of all consultation and engagement activities. This should include the date, type of consultation i.e. online survey, focus group, virtual consultation, face to face (please exclude personal information), customer satisfaction surveys etc and the number of respondents. Please include details of any consultation/engagement activities that were carried out with specific groups and/or protected characteristic/s.</p> <p>The government has undertaken a statutory consultation across each of the six areas that are part of the Devolution Priority Programme (DPP), looking at the benefits of establishing a Mayoral Combined Authority in the area. (Cheshire and Warrington devolution consultation - GOV.UK) The consultation asked local people about the potential benefits of devolution. The consultation findings helped to inform the government about whether Cheshire and Warrington met the necessary statutory tests, demonstrating the area's readiness to deliver a devolution programme.</p> <p>This consultation closed on 13 April 2025 and the government has confirmed that Cheshire and Warrington has passed the statutory tests and can progress with a devolution agreement.</p> <p>To promote awareness of the government consultation, they undertook a series of engagement and promotional activities, including:</p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • issuing a press notice at the start and towards the end of the consultation for local and regional media • a visit by the Minister for Local Government and English Devolution to Ellesmere Port on 13 February which included meeting with local leaders • a social media advertising campaign promoted the consultation on Facebook and Instagram. Across these platforms, a collective 1.65 million impressions and 9,213 video views were reported • distributing physical assets (2,000 flyers, 200 posters, and 100 hard copy consultation documents) <p>The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government ran an in-person event on 26 March in Crewe. Officials from MHCLG attended a further 4 stakeholder run events to provide information on the consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cheshire and Warrington Business Board • Warrington Annual Property Review • Cheshire Association of Local Councils • Cheshire West Voluntary Action <p>In addition, the three constituent authorities also conducted Community Engagement seeing;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 560 individuals engaged • 453 via community pop-ups • 64 people engaged via community events • 43 young people targeted
Feedback received	<p>Please provide a summary of all feedback received. Please include comments relating to specific protected characteristic/s if this has been received. Feedback from other local and/or external regional/national consultations can also be used to assess the impact of your proposal on different protected groups.</p> <p>The government's consultation attracted 1,663 responses from individuals and organisations across Cheshire and Warrington (1,574 from members of the public and 89 from organisations). There was no feedback relating to impact on people based on their protected characteristics.</p>

	<p>As part of the government-led statutory consultation, respondents in favour of the proposal cited the potential for better public transport and public services. Some respondents raised concerns about whether an agreement could deliver benefits to market towns and rural areas.</p> <p>The top devolution priorities from community engagement were;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 44% - transport 28% - economy 16% - environment 12% - skills <p>Further information can be found here:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pages 67-90 (Public Pack) Agenda Document for Cheshire and Warrington Joint Committee, 25/07/2025 10:30 • Cheshire and Warrington devolution consultation response - GOV.UK
Gaps in consultation and engagement feedback	<p>Please identify any gaps in consultation/engagement activities and actions to fill these gaps?</p> <p>Who else do you need to engage with?</p> <p>If the proposal is likely to have a significant disproportionate impact, you should ensure that you have engaged with those likely to be affected by your proposal.</p> <p>The Government led on this statutory consultation which included personal data collection relating to protected characteristics under the 2010 Equality Act. They have confirmed that Cheshire and Warrington have met the statutory tests, but have not provided a breakdown of individual responses due to data protection.</p> <p>It is not envisaged that devolution would have any significant disproportionate impact upon any specific group with a protected characteristic. The purpose of devolution is to bring decision making closer to the people being impacted by these decisions and therefore in theory, the principle impacts of devolution are likely to positively enable people with protected characteristics to more equally access services and fully participate in economic opportunities than if those decisions were made by central government departments.</p>

Section 5 – Equality Analysis

Using the information from sections 2 and 3 please assess the impact of your proposal by protected characteristic. In many cases it is likely that your proposal will impact more significantly on some protected characteristics i.e. age, sex, or disability. Your proposal may not impact on some protected characteristics at all i.e. marriage or civil partnership. If this is the case, please state “no impact” on the template.

For each of the areas below, an assessment needs to be made on whether the policy has a positive, negative or neutral impact, and brief details of why this decision was made and notes of any mitigation should be included. Where the impact is negative, this needs to be given a high, medium or low assessment. It is important to rate the impact of the policy based on the current situation (i.e. disregarding any actions planned to be carried out in future).

- High impact – a significant potential impact, risk of exposure, history of complaints, no mitigating measures in place etc.
- Medium impact – some potential impact exists, some mitigating measures are in place, poor evidence
- Low impact – almost no relevancy to the process, e.g. an area that is very much legislation led and where the Council has very little discretion

Protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010 and other areas that may be impacted	Potential Impact Positive/Negative Not Applicable	Summary of Impact.	Actions and recommendations to mitigate any negative impacts.
Age	Positive	Compliance with the Equality Act 2010 is a core requirement of the Combined Authority. Through local decision making, devolution offers the opportunity for projects and programmes to specifically address age-related challenges in Cheshire and Warrington such as transport, accessibility or skills and employment.	
Carers*	No impact	No negative impact is anticipated, and the Combined Authority has the potential to provide early, targeted support that helps reduce inequalities and improve outcomes for residents with disabilities and their families.	

Protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010 and other areas that may be impacted	Potential Impact Positive/Negative Not Applicable	Summary of Impact.	Actions and recommendations to mitigate any negative impacts.
Care Experience as a child or young person and Care Leavers*	Positive	Care leavers and care experienced young adults are recognised nationally as a group that may face significant disadvantage, including increased risks of financial hardship, housing insecurity, and poorer mental health and access to the job market. The flexibility of the Combined Authority to support care leavers and NEETs (Not in Employment, Education or Training) means that bespoke programmes could be supported to address local challenges using appropriate funding mechanisms.	
Disability	Positive	<p>No negative impact is anticipated, and the Combined Authority has the potential to provide early, targeted support that helps reduce inequalities and improve outcomes for residents with disabilities and their families.</p> <p>Positive impacts could be further enhanced by continuing to ensure that information remains available in accessible formats and that the Combined Authority remain responsive to a range of needs, including physical, sensory, cognitive, and mental health-related disabilities. The Combined Authority should remain responsive to local intelligence which highlights those most in need. Transport and housing have the potential to deliver significant accessibility improvements.</p>	
Neurodivergent Conditions*	Positive	The Adult Skills budget will be devolved to the Combined Authority, which will then have the ability to adapt	

Protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010 and other areas that may be impacted	Potential Impact Positive/Negative Not Applicable	Summary of Impact.	Actions and recommendations to mitigate any negative impacts.
		programmes to better support people with neurodivergent conditions to access the labour market.	
Gender reassignment	No impact		
Pregnancy and maternity	No impact		
Race/ethnicity	Positive	<p>Compliance with the Equality Act 2010 is a core requirement, and devolution emphasises the importance of promoting equality, challenging discrimination, and supporting community cohesion.</p> <p>The Adult Skills budget will be devolved to the Combined Authority, which will then have the ability to adapt programmes to better support any specific ethnic or protected group to enable them to access employment and skills.</p> <p>If appropriate, the Combined Authority could seek to address barriers to integration or economic inclusion to further support community cohesion.</p>	

Protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010 and other areas that may be impacted	Potential Impact Positive/Negative Not Applicable	Summary of Impact.	Actions and recommendations to mitigate any negative impacts.
Religion or belief	No impact		
Sex	Positive	<p>Compliance with the Equality Act 2010 is a core requirement, and devolution emphasises promoting equality, challenging discrimination, and tailoring support to individual needs.</p> <p>Through local decision making, devolution offers the opportunity for projects and programmes to specifically address sex-related challenges in Cheshire and Warrington such as access to high paid jobs in growth sectors and safe public transport.</p>	
Sexual orientation	No impact		
Marriage and civil partnership	No impact		
Rural communities*	Positive	Through local decision making, devolution offers the opportunity for projects and programmes to specifically address rural deprivation and access to services in Cheshire and Warrington.	

Protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010 and other areas that may be impacted	Potential Impact Positive/Negative Not Applicable	Summary of Impact.	Actions and recommendations to mitigate any negative impacts.
		The powers and funding available could allow the Mayoral Combined Authority to tailor training, support for adults to access jobs available locally and enhance transport connectivity.	
Areas of deprivation* (include any impact on people living in poverty who may not live in areas identified as deprived)	Positive	Through local decision making, devolution offers the opportunity for projects and programmes to specifically address pockets of deprivation or barriers to services in Cheshire and Warrington. The powers and funding available could allow the Mayoral Combined Authority to tailor training, support for adults to access jobs available locally and enhance transport connectivity.	
Human rights*	No impact	Devolution is inclusive of the key Human Rights principles. Compliance with the Equality Act 2010 is a core requirement, and devolution is expected to promote equality, challenge discrimination, and tailor support to individual circumstances.	
Health and wellbeing and Health Inequalities* (consider the wider determinants of health such as education, housing, employment, environment, crime and transport, plus	Positive	Devolution aligns with the Council's Plans and Strategies to address health, wellbeing and inequalities. The Mayoral Combined Authority could play a key role in improving health and wellbeing, underpinned by a new bespoke duty in relation to health improvement and health inequalities. This would mean that the Mayoral Combined Authority would need to have regard to the need to	Positive impacts could be supported by continuing to ensure devolution remains inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the needs of all groups. The Combined Authority should remain responsive to local

Protected characteristics from the Equality Act 2010 and other areas that may be impacted	Potential Impact Positive/Negative Not Applicable	Summary of Impact.	Actions and recommendations to mitigate any negative impacts.
impacts on lifestyles and effects on health and care services)		improve health, and reduce health inequalities, in the exercise of its functions. Combined with an expectation that the Mayor would be appointed to one or more of the relevant Integrated Care Partnerships in the area, this could help strengthen the focus and increase the join-up of action to address issues around ill health and inequalities across the area.	intelligence which highlights those most in need.
Procurement/partnership* (if project due to be carried out by contractors/partners etc, identify steps taken to ensure equality compliance)	Neutral	Devolution and the subsequent set up of the Combined Authority will follow all the procedures and guidance as laid out by the Statutory Instrument.	

* **NOTE: This is not a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.**

Section 6 – Justification, Mitigation and Actions

Mitigation	What can you do to mitigate any negative impacts or further enhance positive impacts?
<p>Please provide justification for the proposal if negative impacts have been identified? Are there any actions that could be undertaken to mitigate, reduce or remove negative impacts?</p> <p>Have all available options been explored? Please include details of alternative options and why they couldn't be considered? Please include details of how positive impacts could be further enhanced, if possible?</p>	<p>There are no negative impacts identified. The proposed plan and service model for a Combined Authority are principally a devolution of powers and public money from central government departments.</p> <p>Impacts will be regularly monitored once the Combined Authority is in place, as detailed in Section 7 of this form.</p> <p>The alternative is not to progress with devolution via the establishment of Combined Authority. This would mean that the powers and funding will remain with central government departments and there would be no access to some funding streams such as Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) which are restricted to established Combined Authorities. If devolution were not to take place, the status quo would remain but there is a risk that understanding of the needs of protected groups in the local area may not be fully understood in the longer term.</p> <p>The set up of a Combined Authority allows residents to elect a Mayor, with a mandate that can take forward the needs of the sub-region. The Mayor would also take a seat at the Prime Minister's Council of Nations and Regions as well as the Deputy Prime Minister's Mayoral Council, which would give the area a stronger voice with the government. Cheshire and Warrington is currently one of only 3 areas in the North of England not currently represented.</p>

Section 7 - Monitoring and review

How will the impact of the service, service change, decommissioning of the service, strategy, function, or procedure be monitored? How will actions to mitigate negative impacts be monitored? Date for review of the EA	
Details of monitoring activities	<p>Please include details of how the impact of the proposal will be monitored e.g. performance monitoring, analysis of complaints, equality monitoring data etc. Monitoring should include information on whether actions to mitigate negative impacts have achieved their desired outcome.</p> <p>The Cheshire and Warrington Combined Authority will be required to undertake appropriate monitoring to assess quality and impact. This will include performance data, equality monitoring, and other relevant indicators in line with devolved funding streams requirements. All ongoing monitoring activities will be carried out in accordance with the terms agreed once the Combined Authority has been established and will inform ongoing service development.</p>
Date and responsible officer for the review of the EA	<p>Please include the date, responsible officer, and department. It is recommended that the EA be reviewed approximately 12 months after it has been signed off.</p> <p>Date: August 2026 Responsible Officer: Gemma Davies Department: Growth Director, Cheshire West and Chester Council</p>

Section 8 - Help and support.

For support and advice please contact:

Cheshire East Council: equalityandinclusion@cheshireeast.gov.uk

Cheshire West and Chester Council: equalities@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk

Warrington Borough Council: equalities@warrington.gov.uk



Cheshire +
Warrington

Communications and engagement highlight report

Bringing better jobs,
better transport,
smarter investment
- **now's**
the time.

August 2025



Background



Our communications strategy is focused on ensuring that regional stakeholders are informed of the process, how they get involved, and what they can influence.

We have had a planned approach to engaging core stakeholders since September 2024, and we have engaged, at key milestones, with councillors, staff, MPs, relevant committees/boards, businesses, and partner organisations, as well as our residents through a programme of community engagement.

Activity to date – highlights



- Promotion of the government's consultation
- **Launch of ambassador programme** – sharing testimonials and continued engagement with identified ambassadors
- **Devolution newsletter** – [first issue July 2025](#)
- **Social media** – improving visibility/engagement across Cheshire and Warrington devolution accounts, myth-busting/dispelling misinformation, sharing FAQs etc.
- **Internal communications** – with staff across the three councils/ECW
- **Business engagement** – in partnership with the Business Advisory Board/ECW
- **Member engagement** – programme of activity across three councils/town and parish councils

Communications and engagement –

Key insights



Media coverage

- **52** pieces of news coverage
- **1.07 million** estimated views

Social media

- **1.1 million** impressions
- **386.7k** total reach

Cheshire and Warrington devolution website

- 8.8k active users

Page views:

- [Homepage](#) – 8.2k
- [Devolution](#) – 1.8k
- [Get involved](#) – 1.2k
- [Latest updates](#) – 1k

Social media – organic posts

LinkedIn (July/August):

- 9.5k impressions
- 4.8k members reached
- 6.4% engagement rate
- Followers have grown by 74 to 718
- Account growth is steady, with a positive monthly follower increase

Facebook (July/August):

- 752k impressions (up by 297%*)
- 310k reach (up by 281%*)
- 438 interactions

*all % figures compared to May/June



Social media – paid for advertising



Promotion of devolution explainer animation

- 51.4k video plays
- 34.8k reach
- 68.2k impressions

Younger people campaign

- Targeting people aged 21 to 40
- 437k reach
- 957k impressions
- 1k link clicks

‘Now is the time’ campaign

- Ongoing – running a series of ads from 8 August until 13 September 2025
- Initial ad set is targeting people aged 18 to 30
- Ads will run across META (Facebook/Instagram) and LinkedIn – currently only META is running to ensure best cost per result and good budget utilisation
- 36.8k reach
- 95.4k impressions
- 86 link clicks
- Campaign will be evaluated on 26 August and adjusted accordingly

Community engagement programme



Community engagement is a key part of our overall communications and engagement strategy.

To support with this work, we commissioned an agency – **Social** – to facilitate a programme of community engagement across Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Warrington, with a key focus on targeted youth engagement.

During some of our events, we asked our residents about their thoughts on devolution – [Watch the video on the Cheshire and Warrington website](#)

Community engagement programme

We have directly engaged with

- 560 individuals
- 453 via community pop-up events
- 64 people engaged via community events
- 43 young people targeted

Top devolution priorities from community engagement

44% - transport

28% - economy

16% - environment

12% - skills



Next steps

- Following this initial phase of communications and engagement activity, we have refreshed our strategy
- We have sharpened our approach to focus on key audiences, including younger adults, elected members, and other communities of influence, and giving key advocates the opportunity to have their voice heard
- We are continuing with myth busting/work to dispel misinformation – this is still common in the feedback we receive, so we must be relentless in correcting misinformation/raising awareness of the benefits of devolution
- Work is focusing on an intensive PR campaign and broadening our community and member engagement
- **This means...**

Updated strategy



- **Residents, businesses and partners** will understand what devolution is and isn't, the potential benefits, the process and timeline, and how it affects them
- **Staff** will understand what devolution is and isn't, how it affects their roles, the process, and what it means for their organisation
- **Members** will understand what devolution means for their authority and area, and the stages of the devolution process and decision-making, so they are equipped and supported to talk about devolution using consistent messaging
- **Members** will see the feedback of residents, businesses and communities in the evidence base for decision making and devolution priorities
- **All stakeholders** will know how to get involved and have their say and will be able to see that their responses are reflected in local decision-making

JOINT COMMITTEE FORWARD PLAN 2025/26
Version AUGUST 2025

PART A/B	Joint Committee Date	Host & Venue	Title (draft where not complete)	Purpose of Report	Member Lead	Officer Lead	NOTES
B	29 th August 2025	Cheshire West & Chester Council. Ellesmere Port Library, Civic Way, Ellesmere Port. CH65 OBG.	Cheshire and Warrington Devolution Programme and the Mayoral Combined Authority	This report seeks strategic direction from the Joint Committee for the decisions of each council (Cheshire East Borough Council, Cheshire West and Chester Borough Council and Warrington Borough Council) [the Councils] in Cheshire and Warrington as part of the formal consenting process to proceed with a Combined Authority and associated devolution powers, functions and investment.	Cllr Louise Gittins	Gemma Davies	
A/B			Joint Committee Forward Plan	Update and seek direction	Cllr Louise Gittins	Gemma Davies	

PART A/B	Joint Committee Date	Host & Venue	Title (draft where not complete)	Purpose of Report	Member Lead	Officer Lead	NOTES
B	26 th September 2025	Cheshire East Council	Devolution related business	TBC	TBC	Gemma Davies	
		Council Chamber, Municipal Building, Crewe. CW1 2BJ.	Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Strategy	To consider results of consultation and strategy	TBC	Philip Cox	
A			ECW related business	TBC			
A/B			Joint Committee Forward Plan	Update and seek direction			
	31 st October 2025	Warrington Borough Council Council Chamber, Warrington Town Hall, Sankey Street, Warrington. WA1 1UH	<p><i>The agendas for these meetings will be confirmed following the outcome of the Council decisions in September 2025 and any subsequent changes to the Terms of Reference for the Joint Committee.</i></p>				
	28 th November 2025	Cheshire West & Chester Council. Ellesmere Port Library, Civic Way, Ellesmere Port. CH65 OBG.					

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