

APPENDIX 4 – SWOT ANALYSIS

The tables below identify the relative strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with each service. These will be revisited and updated as the project develops.

Skills Provision

Strengths:

- High attainment and skills across the Borough – increasing year on year at all levels
- Low unemployment rates (<4%)
- Low NEETs
- High quality of current service provision (Cheshire East Lifelong Learning) recognised by Ofsted
- Well established commissioning practices and local supply chain (e.g. CELL)
- High Skills is a priority of the LEP and C&W governance is in place
- Raising the Participation Age (RPA)
- Matrix standard achieved - a quality assurance kitemark for providing advice and guidance
- UTC development in Crewe
- CEC Sector priorities – Science, Advanced Manufacturing, Digital, Financial Services, Digital and Create, Agri-Tech
- Community Hub proposals provide outreach services

Threats:

- There are significant skills policy and funding challenges expected nationally
- Adult Skills budgets and Community Learning budgets will be cut
- Areas Based Reviews might threaten local Higher Education provision
- There could be a trainings/skills provision gap between the current operational programme and 2015-2020 due to a gap in contracts between the Ops.
- Local Plan – sustaining the forecast housing and employment demands – how will these be catered for
- Attainment at 14-16 years old is already good. There is a question of the ‘value add’ at 16–19 year old
- Fragmented landscape of education delivery with free market approach. Questionable if impartial advice is being given

Weaknesses:

- Services are fragmented and not joined up
- Little or no capacity to support people in employment
- Better joined up working with Higher and Further Education could be achieved
- Links between academic institutions and employers need strengthening
- Limited or few degree-level apprenticeships available in STEM subjects, especially science and Maths. Mismatch with strategic priorities of CEC
- Young people don't have the necessary skills employers are looking for and there is an under supply for lower and middle level apprenticeships
- Services are not currently resourced to ‘respond’ to direct evidence of the employment needs of an individual citizen
- Attainment for care leavers is lower than is desirable
- Intelligence about the 19+ cohort is weak
- No central customer records system to manage customers
- Data sharing with Government is very difficult
- Limited labour market intelligence and future skills forecasting
- Careers Advice and Guidance is not of a highly consistent standard
- Young people and parents do not fully appreciate what an apprenticeship is
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Opportunities:

- Securing European Social Fund (ESF) funding to deliver higher level skills programme and CEAG
- Securing technical assistance support to develop European funding opportunities
- Further developing the CEC Employment Pledge Model
- Develop a skills and employment outcome plan for CEC
- Propose an institute of technology in rail and engineering
- Develop an integrated delivery model between 14+ skills team and Business Engagement Team
- Establish a skills and employment forum with employers
- Digital Inclusion and skills – move council services online to ‘digital by default’.
- Focus on skills centred around key growth

- Need to have the right courses in the right locations and with an appropriate cohort size to avoid young people missing out
- Aging demographic makes it difficult to attract a young workforce (pressure of replacement demand)
- There is no funding and provision targeted at upskilling those already in employment
- Cuts to Adult Skills Budget (this year 24%)
- Tighter policy by 2017/18 all apprenticeships should be delivered to higher standards, thus putting off some employers
- Move from grants to employer co-investment and employer routed funding
- Employers don't understand the funding model and approach
- CEC perceived to be a well performing and wealthy borough making it difficult to secure funding/grants
- The capacity to support skills and apprenticeships no longer matches the need to increase productivity
- The majority of apprenticeships are delivered by a single employer
- Approval from the SFA is required for a company to be an RTO, plus approval is required to allow for secondary level sub contracting

- opportunities including rail, science, digital and advanced manufacturing
- Data sharing pilot with DWP
- Partners (neighbouring authorities) commissioning new company to deliver employment mentoring support
- Aggregating employer demand and matching to training/skills provision using sector groupings
- Capturing the benefits associated with HS2
- skills provision for C&W – on behalf of the LEP
- Directly influencing national skills programmes delivered by the Skills Funding Agency, Big Lottery and DWP
- Re-engineering delivery given the replacement of Job Seekers allowance with a Youth Allowance
- Devolution agendas - further powers and control of skills spending as part of Cheshire and Warrington Growth Deal
- Devolution of skills funding from Government
- Develop a Learning Cooperative
- Selling data/intelligence on skills base provision back to National Government

Investment, Growth & Employment

Strengths:

- Legislation states no rise in VTA, NI or IT
- Increasing minimum wage to £8
- Strong political support for economic growth and sector strengths
- Strong demand from businesses for employment land (B2 + B8), especially in the north of the borough
- Growth sector assets – AP, Hurdsfield, Jodrell Bank, Science Corridors
- The borough has a large number of businesses and good diversity including major multinationals, with strong entrepreneurial spirit
- Strong sectors for high skills/productivity (Science, Energy, Technology)
- High quality environment
- Internationally recognised assets e.g. Jodrell Bank
- Strong performing economy and well functioning labour market
- Good relationships and credibility with existing business base
- The business base, by and large, is highly productive

Threats:

- Employment land in the pipeline is not ready deliverable (e.g. no services/infrastructure). Issue with meeting current demand
- Current state of the market is more profitable for housing rather than employment
- Not enough labour supply for key sectors(e.g. care, construction, science)
- Previous 10 years of growth has been lead by public sector. This will not be the case for the next 10 years, which will require private sector growth at a level never previously seen.
- Aging workforce and demographics
- The North West Fund and Evergreen Fund could be delayed (gap in provision) while they are reproced
- Stability of major employers in Cheshire East e.g. Bentley, Barclays
- Attracting high growth and high value business is counter to high business rates
- Private sector growth not always spatially aligned with the council
- Other regions are 'upping their game' – risk of being left behind
- Businesses could chose to locate elsewhere if opportunities are not captured
- Other business engagement and investment businesses could win business in Cheshire East

Weaknesses:

- Limited 'oven ready' employment land available. Demand sometimes out stripping supply
- Previous 10 years have seen a decline in Information and Communication and Manufacturing jobs
- Historic jobs growth has been led by the public sector
- Business Incubator offer does not match with high growth sectors and are not being maximised
- Limited effective engagement with businesses historically (only 1 in 10 have received support, compared with 1 in 3 in Manchester)
- Historic position to attract inward investment has been weak

Opportunities:

- Increased business rates - pooling pilot / national 100% retention
- BIDS/Enterprise Zones
- Business Rates Review 2016
- Stimulating the Development market
- Structural and Government funding opportunities relating to key priorities
- Bringing forward employment land, possibly supplying of council land
- Work with more businesses to help them grow
- Maximising land asset strengths / natural resources e.g. Geothermal
- Major growth projections associated with opportunities around science and HS2, LEP, and Northern Power House
- International Inward investment through UKTI + others
- Integrating business engagement with skills
- Develop commissioning relationships with Manchester
- Strategic partnerships – LEP plus other regions
- HS2 Supply chain and sector growth
- Employment growth is forecast to be 0.7%
- TIF model – business rate pooling
- Review of Business incubators to improve effectiveness
- Income through services to businesses and sponsorship
- Helping businesses to grow by working with them to secure grants and loans
- Influencing government and key stakeholders to

bring funding and growth into Cheshire East - specifically in high growth sectors

- Working with high growth sectors (e.g. digital and creative, Advanced manufacturing) to stimulate growth
- Centralising employment and labour market intelligence
- De-risking investment opportunities and accelerating the delivery of sites for employment