



# **All Change for Crewe: High Growth City**

September 2013



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## A Commitment to Crewe

175 years of rail heritage undoubtedly puts Crewe at the heart of both the UK's rail network and manufacturing industry. Companies such as Bentley Motors, UK Fuels and Fujitsu, make Crewe an unrivalled centre of advanced manufacturing and engineering, with an impressive reputation for high quality and innovative manufacturing and product development.

As the original UK railway town, Crewe is a vibrant intersection with 360 degree connectivity to all major cities across the UK and beyond due to its close links to the motorway network and major international airports. This unequalled connectivity makes Crewe the only place in the region with the real potential to become an important gateway between the economies of northern and southern England.

Benefiting from having six million people within one hour of the town, Crewe is undoubtedly a well connected and strategically located base for outward facing and ambitious businesses who value good transport links, affordable land values all within one hour travel time to London.

Here at Cheshire East, with our partners across the sub-region, we are enthused by the pivotal role that Crewe plays in the future of the wider region's economies, and have a clear vision that by 2030 Crewe will become the nationally significant economic centre and will continue to be one of the leading advanced engineering and manufacturing centres in the country.

This will be strengthened through both the East Cheshire University Technical College, an innovative facility for training the highly-skilled engineers of the future, and the planned Automotive Research, Development and Supply Hub, which will capitalise on significant investment and expand on the town's significant automotive skills base. These will further be underpinned by a continued commitment to sustainable growth and significant new infrastructure investment.

As a High Growth City, Crewe is the premier location in the North West region for advanced manufacturing and engineering, and it will continue to be the location of choice as a place where innovation and manufacturing flourish, and where unrivalled connectivity connects companies to the rest of the country and beyond.



**Councillor Michael Jones,  
Leader of Cheshire East Council**





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



**Crewe is the critical keystone that will support the exponential growth of the UK Plc as the premier northern location for productivity and economic output.**

The Council and its partners are committed to releasing the massive potential within Crewe, and delivering the vision for Crewe: High Growth City by making 5 key commitments to the future of Crewe;

- **Achievable and Sustainable Growth**
- **A World Class Automotive and Rail Hub**
- **A Market Leader in Renewable Energy**
- **Connecting Crewe**
- **A UK Centre of Excellence for Employer Led Skills**

The town has long been at the **core of the UK's manufacturing industry**, built on over 175 years of rail heritage and home to major manufacturers, suppliers and engineering powerhouses like **Bentley Motors, UK Fuels, Fujitsu** the town has built itself a deserved reputation for high quality manufacturing and product development which in itself has attracted major investment.

Crewe is the only place within the North West that will truly create the opportunity for decentralisation of the economy outside of London and the South East, creating a place where **innovation and manufacturing** can take advantage of the direct and rapid connectivity to London that will be provided by HS2, along with direct connections to both road and rail logistics networks and easy access to Manchester International Airport.

Where other locations may offer one or two of these attributes, **Crewe is the only place in the UK that can genuinely offer businesses and investors the perfect combination of affordable land values, significant connectivity and attractive settings** to provide a real and viable relocation offer, and the ability to split their working operations across sites, capitalising on the benefits of Crewe while still having central offices or marketing sites in London, Manchester and elsewhere.

In 2013, **Bentley Motors announced £1bn investment** into Crewe from 2015. This investment provides the potential to create a UK automotive hub which not only supports the assembly and production of their new SUV model but also builds a supplier base of innovative new automotive businesses which can not only service the prestige of Bentley Motors but other UK manufacturing plants.

The vital role Crewe plays within the Cheshire & Warrington sub-region has already been recognised by Cheshire & Warrington LEP. Together with its partners, it is already drawing in new funding streams, and will continue to seek new ones.

The pivotal role that Crewe plays will be reflected in the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), ensuring Crewe fulfils its role as a key player on the regional stage.

**Crewe – a High Growth City – must build on this opportunity and create the right conditions to capture future growth.**

By 2030 Crewe will be;

- **A nationally significant economic centre** with a total population in excess of 100,000 people, with a large highly skilled working age population, business density and with start-up rates, output, productivity and salary levels that meet or exceed national levels.
- **A key driver and hub for investment, connectivity, enterprise and business across the South Cheshire sub region**, with investment and development in Crewe not only directly benefitting Crewe as High Growth City, but with wider impacts to Congleton, Winsford, Stoke, Newcastle and beyond,
- **Widely recognised as an important anchor to the North West region** and a key gateway between northern and southern England, and as the heart of the multi centred UK economy,
- **One of the leading advanced engineering and manufacturing centres in England**, building on its rich industrial heritage and successful outward-facing firms, with a major focus on automotive, advanced engineering and advanced manufacturing sectors,
- **Home to one of the premier education facilities in the form of the East Cheshire University Technical College**, a major facility for training highly skilled engineers and manufacturing graduates who will then boost the local and sub regional economic offer,



# Five Key Commitments to Crewe

## A World Class Automotive and Rail Hub

Working in partnership with Bentley Motors and other key players in the sector to create an Automotive Research, Development and Supply Hub in Crewe and accompanying rail centre of excellence, supported by a bespoke Growth Accelerator programme and strategic logistics centre, to capitalise on the £800 million investment announced by Bentley Motors in July, as well as Crewe's prestigious industrial heritage and skills base.

## A UK Centre of Excellence for Employer Led Skills

Developing Crewe as a national centre of excellence for engineering and manufacturing skills by working with industry leaders like Bentley Motors to build a genuinely employer-led approach. This includes delivery of Crewe's University Technical College, apprentice and workplace learning programmes to create a "work ready" local workforce.

## A Market Leader in Renewable Energy

Realising the potential of the UK's first Deep Geothermal Energy Centre, including cutting edge research and development facilities, in order to position Crewe at the forefront of the global renewable energy agenda, securing new inward investment and growth.

## Connecting Crewe

Delivering a £500 million investment programme to improve our road and rail infrastructure and maximise Crewe's massive connectivity opportunities which will create the right conditions for future growth and development.

## Achievable and Sustainable Growth

Creating the right mix of sites to drive employment and balanced housing growth in Crewe, ensuring we deliver the right types of development opportunities in the right places to support sustainable growth going forward.

- **The prime location for the development of new growth sectors such as renewables, high speed rail, aerospace and premium quality automotive.** Through a programme of phased development, Basford East is firmly established as a high quality business location with significant levels of Grade A office accommodation, dedicated incubator space and other business opportunities, housing multinational companies, leading edge logistics firms, university spin-outs and a wide range of technology-rich enterprises including automotive research and development,
- **Central to the expansion of the highly skilled automotive engineering sector within the UK,** kick started by the development of a major new headquarters and manufacturing facility for Bentley Motors,
- **A flagship for the UK renewables sector** through the realisation of a deep geothermal energy centre and accompanying research and development facility,
- **A worldwide centre of excellence in rail engineering,** building on Crewe's exceptional rail heritage and skills base,
- **An anchor for wider growth along the M6 Corridor** linking with growth in Congleton and Macclesfield as well as reaching down into the West Midlands,
- **Recognised as a sought-after place in the South Cheshire Belt where talented and able people want to live, work and play,** and where once previously deprived areas of the town have been completely revitalised and re-energised.

Crewe is perfectly located for connectivity to the UK's motorway network, creating an attractive location for logistics and manufacturing sectors to grow. With **ongoing investment from the Department for Transport, the Highways Agency and private sector developers** to expand and enhance capacity on the M6 and connections to Crewe over coming years, the town will be in an unrivalled position to attract businesses and investment.

Crewe is also uniquely positioned within the **UK rail network**, with a hub station at Crewe being able to not only tap in to **a passenger base of over six million people within one hours travel, but providing 360 degree rail connectivity**. Crewe's current and future role as one of the key intersections of the UK rail network provides unrivalled connectivity benefits for the planned HS2 network. This applies not only to the existing South Cheshire commuter base, but also gives unrivalled connections for North Wales, the north midlands and north west of England to the rest of the UK by developing a major Hub Station at Crewe. This scale of connectivity means Crewe has a unique offer which can secure the maximum influence and impact from HS2 in terms of both the economy and passenger market.

**Simply put, there is no better place for well connected, strategically located advanced manufacturing and engineering businesses in the UK to develop and grow.** Crewe provides the perfect combination of connectivity, accessibility, ambition and support to be the key factor in unlocking the UK's economic growth and development.



# CONTEXT



**SQW consultants, supported by Cambridge Econometrics and Colin Buchanan were appointed by Cheshire East Council in the summer of 2009 to provide consultancy support to deliver a high-level economic development strategy and action planning process for Crewe. This visioning work ran from August 2009 through to April 2010.**

The purpose of the work was to provide a clear economic case for Crewe as a regionally significant player and define the major strategic opportunities and challenges facing the area over at least the next 10-20 years. The aims also included the development of a deliverable, yet ambitious, Economic Development Strategy and investment framework for the area, and recommendations on appropriate implementation and governance arrangements.

This report represents an update and refresh to key elements of that 2010 strategy document to build on recent positive announcements, strategic developments and other complementary factors which need to be woven in to the narrative for the future growth and development of Crewe.

It underlines the case that Crewe is not only the major driver within the South Cheshire Economy, but will be the heart and engine of its growth and transformation over the coming years to cement Crewe's place as the dynamic focus for growth and development not just locally but sub-regionally, regionally and nationally.

This report includes a number of annexes which provide additional evidence, information and context to the development of Crewe, and should be read in conjunction with this report.

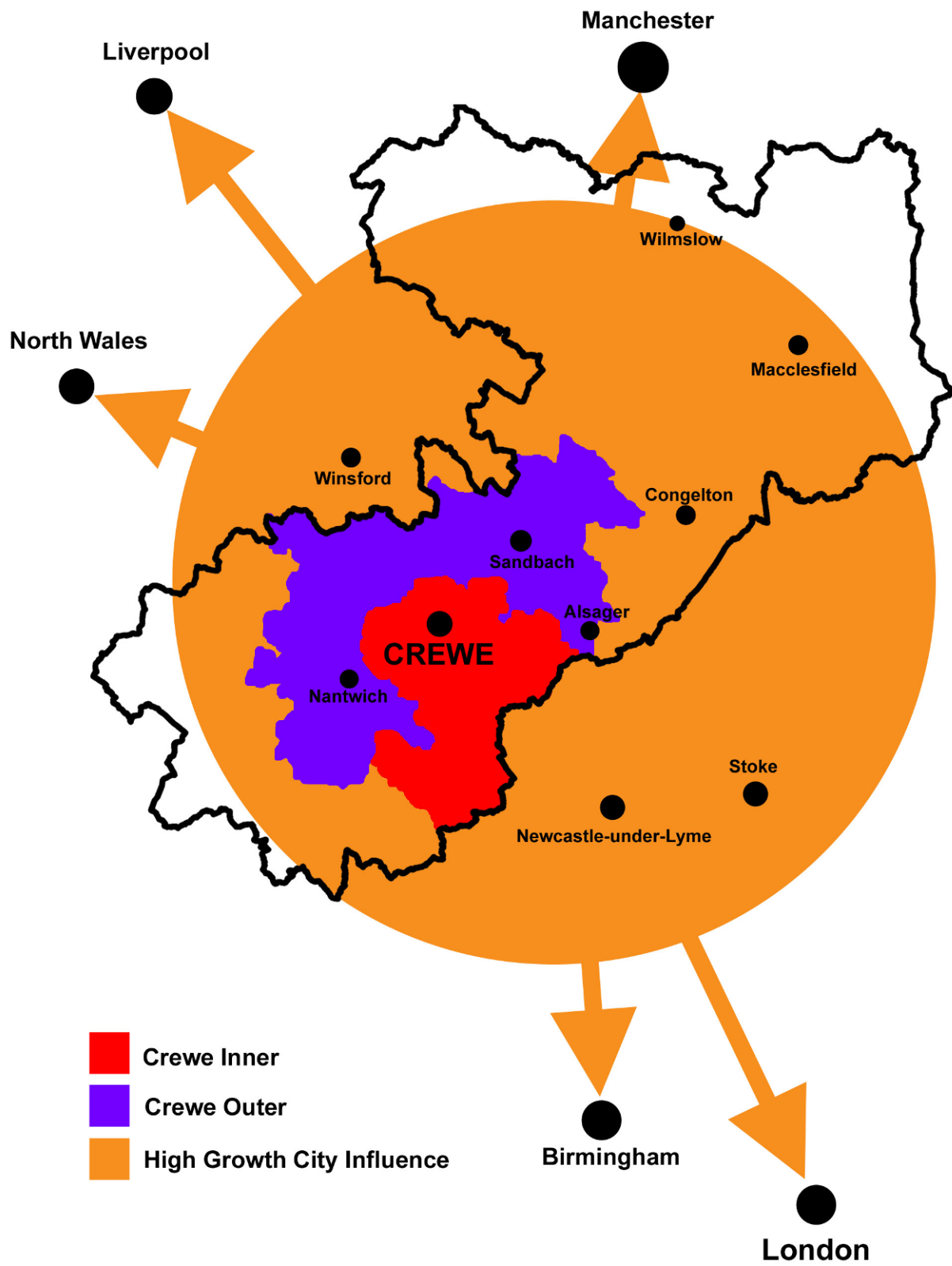
The definition of Crewe as a place is a key part of the strategy development process, and for framing the thinking on how the evidence base is best handled, structured, and utilised. The most appropriate geographical definition however, varies according to the issues at hand – local issues, for example on levels of worklessness, deprivation and health, are often best viewed at a finely grained spatial scale, whilst policy and wider economic trends and drivers operate at a much broader geographical level.

Crewe as an economy, therefore, operates across a number of different functional geographies, which vary in scale as each one has its own spatial footprint. For instance, the Travel to Work area of Crewe and Northwich reaches from the town of Northwich, which lies 16 miles further north of Crewe down to the most northerly tip of the Shropshire local authority district boundary towards the South of Crewe. In contrast, Crewe's urban core encompasses a much smaller geography which extends southwards towards (but not reaching) the A500 and northwards towards (but not reaching) Copenhall Moss.

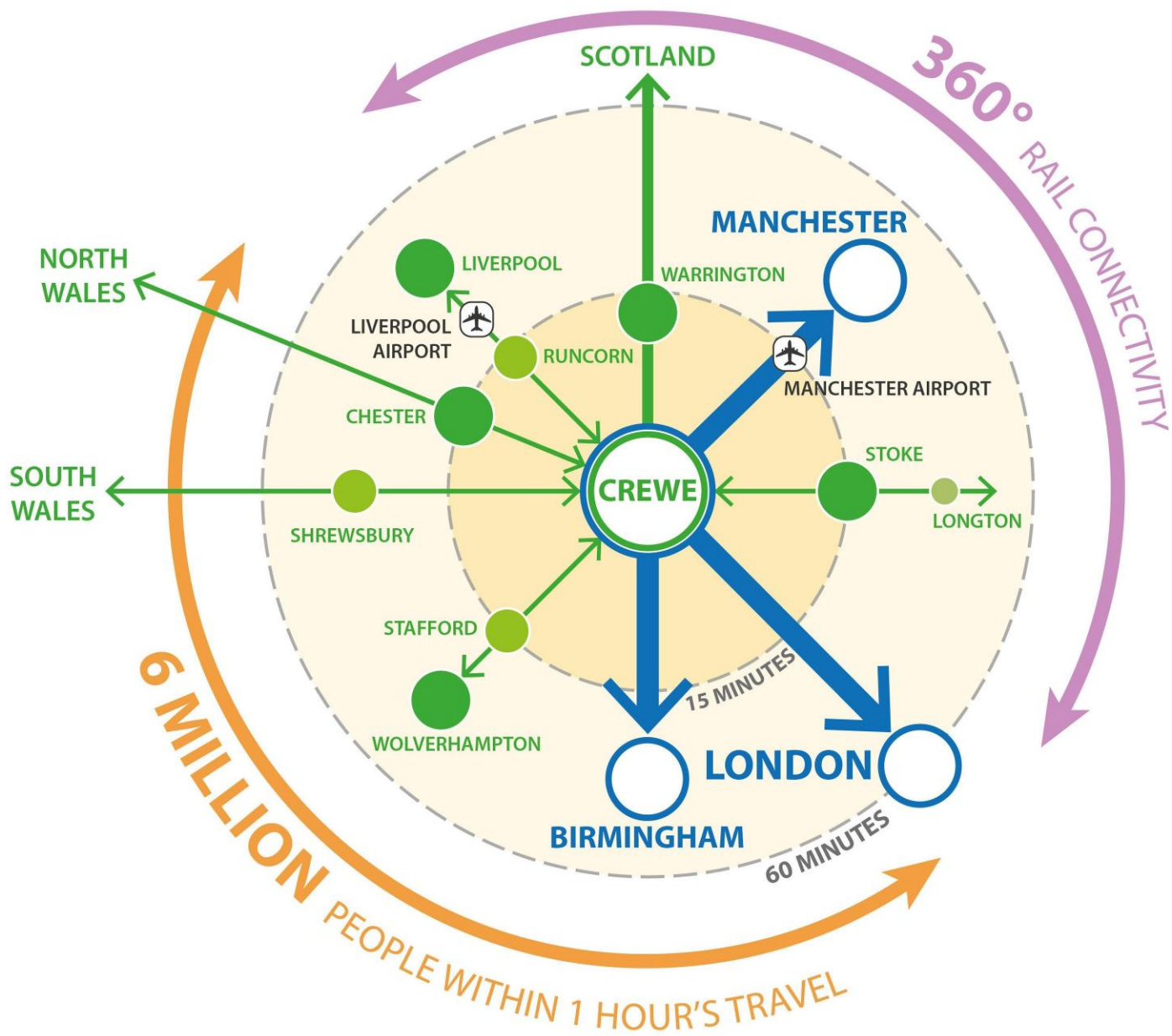
Of course, when assembling and analysing data, it is necessary to set precise boundaries for the Crewe Study Area, to ensure consistency in the secondary data collection and analysis and to correspond to the availability of appropriate socio-economic data sources. Given this, two boundary definitions were agreed with the original SQW Steering Group in 2010, based upon client guidance and discussion. These correspond to 'inner' and 'outer' footprints for Crewe and were constructed by building-up Lower layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs), the smallest geographical areas from which reasonably robust secondary data can be sourced. Specifically:

- *'Crewe inner' was designed to reflect the spatial footprint of the urban area of Crewe town centre and its proximate housing areas, as well as the major employment sites of Basford East and West. As such, it stretches from Copenhall Moss in the north to Bridgemere, a village situated just off the A51 to the south.*
- *'Crewe outer' includes this area, plus Crewe's rural hinterland, nearby market towns and smaller settlements with strong functional economic linkages and interdependencies with Crewe. 'Crewe outer', therefore, encompasses Nantwich to the east and Alsager to the west, up to and beyond Sandbach in the north and to the border with Stoke City Council to the south.*









# CREWE: HIGH GROWTH CITY

*High Speed Rail*

11:53:24

**London**

**12:00**

Birmingham

12:10

Manchester  
via Manchester Airport

12:20

London

12:30

Glasgow

12:40



**As the largest town in South Cheshire, Crewe is already the area's primary population centre and its major economic hub. Its 5000 businesses include concentrations of professional services, distribution, logistics and advanced engineering built on its rich rail and automotive heritage. It is located in not only one of the most prosperous parts of the region but the best connected creating the perfect location for job creation, growth and development.**

Crewe is the only place within the North West that will truly create the opportunity for decentralisation of the economy outside of London and the South East, creating a place where major employers can easily and rapidly locate office operations, call centres, staff hubs, logistics operations and R&D environments, whilst still having the direct and rapid connectivity to the City of London and their South East headquarters that will be provided by HS2, along with direct connections to both road and rail logistics networks.

Where other places in the UK have been unable to flex and adapt to the changing financial climate and suffered as a result, Crewe has begun to thrive, with major housing and mixed use development schemes underway, confirmation of over £1bn investment in highly skilled jobs and technologies and more investment committed to delivering in infrastructure across Crewe than ever before.

Crewe has long been known for its industrial heritage and its strong rail background. Now Crewe is capitalising on those skills, experiences and advantages as part of the wider M6 corridor of growth to deliver the vision for All Change for Crewe and to take up its place as the UK's High Growth City.

Where other locations may offer one or two of these things, Crewe is the only place in the UK that can genuinely offer businesses and investors the perfect combination of affordable land values, significant connectivity and attractive settings to provide a real and viable relocation offer, and the ability to split their working operations across sites, capitalising on the benefits of Crewe whilst still having central offices or marketing sites in London, Manchester and elsewhere.

Its strategic location within the M6 Growth Corridor from Birmingham to Manchester allows it to act as the key linkage between these major hubs and the wider Cheshire economy, opening up major development sites in Congleton, Sandbach and beyond.

Earlier this year, the Government issued its response to Lord Heseltine's review into all aspects of Government policy that affect economic growth. This set out its vision for local economic growth - unleashing the ambition and creativity of local leaders, by devolving resource and responsibility to those places which can demonstrate credible and compelling economic leadership, in pursuit of growth.

The Government subsequently committed to negotiate Growth Deals with every Local Enterprise Partnership in England, which will create new freedoms, flexibilities and influence over resources for local economies. As part of these Growth Deals, the Government has invited LEPs to develop Strategic Economic Plans (SEPs) which provide a coherent set of strategic objectives and actions that address the economic challenges and opportunities of each sub-region. This will be the key mechanism to secure more public sector funding for local projects and programmes which deliver economic growth (jobs and productivity), to be principally funded through:

- a new Single Local Growth Fund, that will include the key economic levers of skills, housing and transport funding
- the next round of European Structural and Investment funds

Crewe plays a strategically vital role within the economy of the Cheshire & Warrington sub-region. This has already been recognised by our business-led Local Enterprise Partnership that has been leading much of our work on shaping economic growth and utilising resources already awarded to it (e.g. Growing Places Fund, Local Transport Board funding). The LEP and a sub-regional approach with our partner Councils will also draw in other funding streams which, hitherto, it has not had access to, including funds to promote innovation managed through the Government's Technology Strategy Board.



The importance of Crewe, and the pivotal role it plays in relation to other local economies to which it is so well connected, needs to be reflected in the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), and the accompanying European Structural Investment Funds Strategy, which sits within this. The SEP is currently being developed ahead of a draft submission to Government in October. This will be informed by this update and refresh to the All Change for Crewe strategy, which incorporates many new and emerging developments that synch with Government growth policy.

Layered between the All Change for Crewe: High Growth City strategy and the new Strategic Economic Plan, the Council's recently launched Vision and Strategy for Economic Growth captures the scale of ambition for the whole borough, including Crewe. It sets out a range of initiatives that the Council is already committing to, which will be accelerated and enhanced when the new funding streams start to become available over the next 18 months.

Building on the 2010 All Change for Crewe studies led by SQW Consultants, this updated report sets out the Council's ambitious and deliverable vision for the growth and transformation of Crewe, capitalising on its key assets such as its connectivity and its manufacturing skills base to unlock Crewe's latent potential and deliver the vision of a High Growth City.

This vision is best captured by the term "High Growth City", which describes the Council and its partner's ambitious plans to deliver the All Change for Crewe agenda by;

- Continuing to realise the development of the major schemes and projects already underway in Crewe such as Bentley Motors expansion, the Basford development and other key sites,
- Delivering the vision for a skills hub within Crewe, shaped and led by the development of East Cheshire University Technical College, a rail skills academy and the realisation of an Automotive Innovation Hub within Crewe,

- Driving forward the growth agenda across the area to unlock new major employment sites and developments to meet both latent demand and future projected growth in sites along the M6 Growth Corridor including Radway Green, Capricorn, Radnor Park, Basford and Leighton West,
- Realising the massive potential for Crewe to act as a launch pad for new and emerging sectors like geothermal energy and advanced rail engineering,
- Investing in and delivering significant major infrastructure projects such as the Crewe Green Link Road, M6 improvements and A500 widening to facilitate growth,
- Unlocking the connectivity potential of HS2 by providing a key junction and hub location through which major areas of the UK population can connect to the HS2 line.

This report outlines the key issues that are facing Crewe, and the actions and approaches that the Council and its partners, building on the previous research and current programmes and projects are undertaking to not only address these, but to unlock the potential of Crewe as a High Growth City. These areas of action are;

**Strategic Aim 1:** All Change for Crewe's knowledge economy people and businesses

**Strategic Aim 2:** All Change for Crewe's connectivity and linkages

**Strategic Aim 3:** All Change for Crewe's physical development

**Strategic Aim 4:** All Change for Crewe's liveability, local transport and aspiration

**Strategic Aim 5:** All Change for Crewe's image, perception and leadership

The Council's emerging Core Strategy establishes the planning framework for future developments in the wider Crewe area for the period up to 2030. A range of employment sites are allocated both on the edge of the town and within the wider area, particularly the M6 corridor. To facilitate economic growth, the plan's strategy is firmly focused upon the 'All Change for Crewe' initiative and thereby seeks to allocate the majority of new employment sites, and the homes needed to support new jobs, in the south of the Borough.

This approach is favoured, as land in the north of the Borough is principally constrained by the North Cheshire Green Belt and other environmental considerations. Although the Core Strategy allocates a surplus of employment land when judged against the needs assessments contained in the Employment Land Review (2012), the Council is receptive to the need to provide a range of sites to provide flexibility and choice. The delivery of employment sites will necessarily be phased due to infrastructure requirements, which is clearly factored into the emerging planning framework, but once adopted, the Core Strategy will provide a key delivery mechanism and a valuable first step towards achieving the objectives of the 'High Growth City: Beyond Crewe' report. However, the Local Plan is based on what can be shown to be delivered by 2030 based on current evidence and may need to be reviewed should the Council be successful in attracting the investment needed to fully meet the aspirations detailed in the report.



BEYOND CREWE



**Whilst the focus on economic growth will be on the existing Crewe urban area, the scale and benefits of High Growth City extends beyond this to other parts of the sub-region and beyond. Central to this will be further enhancements to the rail and road connectivity radiating out of Crewe.**

High Growth City, developed alongside the sub-region's other major development project, Atlantic Gateway, will be transformative – unleashing the potential of the wider sub-region, by building on the area's strengths and creating the conditions for thousands of new jobs and homes, and enhancing even further our already high levels of productivity (GVA), to levels on a par with the over-heated South East.

This will be delivered as follows:

**Local Plan** – The Council is currently preparing a Core Strategy as a first stage in the production of a Local Plan for Cheshire East. This is a key document, providing the planning policy framework for determining future planning applications but more importantly, helping to set out the vision for jobs-led growth in the Borough. A range of employment sites in and around Crewe, including the M6 corridor, will deliver a significant number of new jobs, and the homes to support them during the plan period up to 2013. It is against this context that the aspirations to develop a 'High Growth City' focused on Crewe will be based, providing the 'golden thread' which links sustainable economic growth to the plan-making process.

**Crewe** – Planned growth through the All Change for Crewe regeneration programme will deliver significant population growth and up to 14,500 new jobs by 2031, but this is just the start of it. Super-charged growth will take the town forward beyond 2030 from this point with even higher levels of growth focused around a new Central Business District at the HS2 Hub Station at Crewe, with the potential for the hub to generate over 5,000 new homes and at least 20,000 new jobs in the wider area. Building on public and private sector investment in the pipeline for Crewe, it is at this point that Crewe emerges from the shadows that the moniker "railway town" implies, and becomes High Growth City – a modern and dynamic city that is universally desired as a place to live, work and invest.

**M6 Growth Corridor** – the proximity of Crewe and other major growth areas along the M6 corridor, provide the sub-region with an enticing proposition for investors with plans to deliver new jobs and homes. Recently announced funding for improvements to M6 junctions 16 and 17 will accelerate development at previously allocated employment sites at J17 (Sandbach) and close to the J16 (A500 Basford). To capitalise on this investment, other potential sites have been proposed close to these junctions, including at Radway Green, which would look to provide an opportunity to retain key existing jobs and promote diversification. Congleton also features as a key part of the M6 Growth Corridor – this key town will transform itself on the back of advanced plans for investment in a new northern link road which will secure and create around 3,000 jobs as well as 3,500 new homes, alongside multi-million pound investment in enhanced leisure, retail and education facilities.

**Macclesfield** – will be freed up for new housing and employment opportunities through investment in key existing infrastructure constraints, and better connectivity, through SEMMMS, into Greater Manchester and including key projects like the Silk Road and Poynton Relief Roads developments and enhancement of the A6 Didsbury. Major new commercial investment in the town centre's retail and leisure offer are well advanced, recognising the credentials for growth in the town, and its relationship to the aspirational requirement of communities both locally and across to South Manchester and North Derbyshire.

**Congleton** – capitalising on Congleton's strong work ethic and major business base the realisation of the Congleton Link Road scheme will unlock significant growth potential within Congleton particularly at Radnor and Congleton Business Park, helping cement its place as one of the key major sites along the M6 corridor of growth and within the wider context of Crewe: High Growth City.

**Chester and Warrington** - as other significant economies in our sub-region have assets and reputations that are renowned. Our High Growth City approach will enhance this further – with faster and more regular rail connections within and outside of the region, their strategic sites for employment and housing will realise increase commercial viability and achieve accelerated delivery.

**North-east Cheshire towns** – aligned with the key draw of our regional capital, Manchester, these towns share the same assets in terms of local and global accessibility, with major investment in the road and air infrastructure – SEMMMS and Airport City. Building on these and the connectivity of High Growth City, we have the potential to create thousands more jobs and homes.

**New strategic highways investment corridors** will be created within Cheshire East. Firstly, linking the planned SEMMMS relief road in the north via Macclesfield and Congleton to the M6 at J17 and then on to Crewe. Secondly, developing plans with the Highways Agency for the A500 corridor to become an “Expressway” between Crewe and the Potteries. These corridors will act as the catalyst for growth for both existing businesses and new areas for development and growth, all of which will be linked into the expansion and connectivity benefits provided at Crewe as part of the wider High Growth City concept.

**Sustainable Towns** – so many of our smaller market towns and villages in Cheshire have road and rail connectivity that are unrivalled anywhere in the UK, with fast and frequent access to major population centres and commercial markets. With High Growth City, these towns stand to benefit even further. They will experience economic growth as they become even more desirable places to live, with increased investment in SoHos (Small Office / Home Office) resulting from imminent invest in Superfast Broadband (Sfb) by June 2015 - and beyond then with plans for UltraFast Broadband (UfB).

**And wider still** – the plan isn’t to constrain the benefits of High Growth City, but to ensure the benefits of it are balanced and sustained in both environmental and economic terms. To do this, we’re collaborating with towns beyond our own sub-region, ensuring that they share some of the benefits, building on their respective strengths and competitive advantages to maximise the benefit of such major investment in HS2 and our wider infrastructure. Stoke/North Staffordshire, Shrewsbury and the West Midlands automotive centres are in the front row of the audience for this, but we’re keen to get them up to share our stage with some active participation to share in our planned success.





# UNDERSTANDING CREWE





In many ways, Crewe is a unique town. Situated in the heart of Cheshire, within the local authority area of Cheshire East, it is considered a key 'gateway to the North' although the town also links the North West region – both its businesses and communities – to the West Midlands, London, the wider South East and beyond. The quality of the area's strategic transport connections – and through these its accessibility to the rest of the UK – is undoubtedly one of the town's major economic strengths. Indeed, Crewe has excellent links to the West Coast Main Line, M6 motorway, airports in Manchester, Liverpool and Birmingham as well as major seaports at Liverpool and Holyhead.

Crewe's early development dates from the establishment in the 1830's of a rail interchange in what was then a small village, for major rail links between London, Birmingham and Liverpool. The Grand Junction Railway company expanded the settlement to accommodate the railway workers. As the growth of the railway industry slowed towards the end of the 19th Century, the town's economy diversified, with printing, chemicals, brick making and cloth making becoming established. In the 1940's Rolls Royce moved car production from Derby and London to Crewe and during the war Crewe became a major centre for aircraft engines – the aerospace factory employing around 10,000 people at its peak.

In 1998 the then parent company Vickers, sold Rolls-Royce cars and Bentley separately – production of Rolls Royce was acquired by BMW and moved to the south, whilst the Crewe factory, acquired by the Volkswagen Group, remained the home of Bentley Motors, leading to large scale investment and job creation. Bentley is the town's largest private sector employer.

The railways still play a significant part in local industry with the major focus at Crewe Works, which carries out train maintenance and inspection, home to Bombardier Transportation since 2001. Recently railway maintenance has increased in importance and is slowly rebuilding a reputation for Crewe (together with Bentley) for advanced engineering skills, with Unipart, Atkins, Carillion, Network Rail and others locating advanced testing and engineering facilities in Crewe to take advantage of both the rail network connections and the advanced skills base.

Today Crewe Railway station remains a busy and important gateway to the North West, Midlands and south England, and serves as a major interchange on the West Coast Main Line, with direct trains to London, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham and Glasgow. Its national connectivity is also enhanced by its proximity to the M6 and other principal regional roads.

The economy has diversified over the last 20 years and there are a number of business parks around the town hosting light industry and offices, the most prominent being the Crewe Business Park, the UK's first "green" business park. This is a 67 acre site with blue chip companies such as Air Products, UK Fuels, and Fujitsu Services Ltd. Crewe has also become a regional distribution centre, taking advantage of its good road links to the national transport network. Major public sector employers include Leighton Hospital and Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU) creating a diverse and strong employment base with massive potential for sustained and sustainable growth.

In 2011 the leading private sector employers and public sector agencies came together to create the All Change for Crewe Partnership Board, a unique delivery group who act to co-ordinate and steer the efforts and investments of all parties in the town in order to kick start the development and economic success of the town for years to come.

# DELIVERING THE VISION



The All Change for Crewe vision set out an approach to delivering the transformation of Crewe and laid an incredibly successful base from which major schemes have grown and developed, ranging from securing over £50m of investment in infrastructure from Government and other sources in 2013/14 and the development of a High Speed rail centre within Crewe to confirmation of Bentley Motors proposals to build its flagship SUV model within Crewe and invest over £800m in the UK economy.

The High Growth city concept as the next step in the delivery of the All Change for Crewe vision represents an exciting new growth trajectory for Crewe. It seeks to address pro-actively those challenges that are currently holding back the economic contribution of the area, and to maximise its considerable opportunities.

Our Strategic and Operational Aims are outlined in the following sub-sections as a way to capture the projects, programmes and approaches that will assist the Council and its partners in realising the vision for Crewe as the UK's High Growth City.

These areas of action are;

**Strategic Aim 1:** All Change for Crewe's knowledge economy people and businesses

**Strategic Aim 2:** All Change for Crewe's connectivity and linkages

**Strategic Aim 3:** All Change for Crewe's physical development

**Strategic Aim 4:** All Change for Crewe's liveability, local transport and aspiration

**Strategic Aim 5:** All Change for Crewe's image, perception and leadership

These Strategic Aims set out the overall aspiration for addressing Crewe's key needs and unlocking Crewe's potential. They are complimented by a set of Operational Aims that describe ways in which the Council and its partners are already or will address these Aims and a series of Key Commitments which prioritise the Councils and its partners work in unlocking Crewe's role as the High Growth City.

## STRATEGIC AIM 1: All Change for Crewe's knowledge economy

We aim to:

- Raise the competitiveness of the local economy
- Continue the process of economic restructuring
- Grow the local business base more quickly with a focus on higher value enterprises
- Nurture and support our emerging growth sectors
- Up-skill our residents and workers
- Support the transition to higher skilled and better paid employment.

Globalisation in the service sector as well as manufacturing means that the future economic growth of Crewe will be increasingly dependent on "knowledge economy" firms which create competitive advantage through innovation in products and processes and through the know-how and skills of their managers and employees along with the ability to partner these firms with Crewe's significant manufacturing industrial base to create a perfect synergy of concept, design and realisation.

Developing a thriving and sustainable knowledge economy with high value-added employment will necessitate substantial improvements in skills levels, such that local people can offer the skills that knowledge-intensive businesses require. Achieving this will demand action across all ages; up-skilling Crewe's existing workforce to meet more challenging future requirements and ensuring that young people leave the education system suitably qualified for, and informed about, future opportunities.



## OPERATIONAL AIMS

We will support the development of Crewe's knowledge economy by:

- Delivering a cutting edge University Technical College (UTC) in Crewe. The creation of the UTC focused on the advanced manufacturing and engineering sectors and backed by leading companies and experts such as Bentley Motors and Siemens will provide a valuable new asset for the development of advanced engineering and manufacturing businesses within Crewe and South Cheshire. It will build on the existing strong engineering heritage in Crewe to develop a new generation of engineers and manufacturers who are not only trained to the highest levels of expertise in the most advanced technologies, but are doing so hand in hand with the private sector, ensuring Crewe's graduates are not only highly skilled but are work place ready,
- Working with South Cheshire and Reaseheath Colleges and partners schools and institutions across Crewe to deliver a truly employer led skills agenda,
- Improving attainment in the low performing schools to ensure that young people leave the education system with the skills and qualifications that will let them progress to well paid employment. This will include a focus on attainment in English, and Science, Technology, English and Maths (STEM) subjects ensuring that the young people can make informed subject choices (especially around the STEM subjects), to enable them to succeed in the knowledge economy.
- Increasing the skills and qualifications of current Crewe residents to enable them to compete for higher skilled jobs in the future.
- Delivery, in direct partnership with Bentley Motors Ltd, of an Automotive Research, Development and Supply Hub (ARDS) within Crewe (potentially at the Leighton or Basford East sites with wider links to Radway Green and other employment areas) that will capitalise on the highly skilled graduates emerging from the UTC and Bentley's supply chain proximity to create a centre for excellence in manufacturing and engineering within Crewe linked not only to Bentley but the wider UK automotive industry and global markets,
- Developing a Growth Accelerator programme within Crewe and the wider area that supports and links to the development of the ARDS to create the supportive framework for growth that will attract investment and development in the wider area,
- Promoting the role of Crewe within the emerging High Speed Rail skills sector and in the accompanying Rail Academy proposals to ensure Crewe maximises its potential as a rail and engineering skills hub,
- Supporting existing major employers in developing the skills of their managers and staff, and their innovation activities; mitigating risks to existing high-value employment in Crewe, and exploring opportunities for further development of their operations in the town,
- Helping to nurture new innovative businesses, by providing a supportive environment for early-stage knowledge-intensive firms; establishing an innovation centre within the Basford development to act as a focal point for the development of new knowledge economy businesses in Crewe – including those emerging from private sector spin-outs, and those taken forward by graduates from local/nearby Higher Education Institutions,
- Develop the concept of a deep geothermal research and development centre in partnership with Keele University and others as proposals relating to the emerging geothermal energy projects are realised,
- Ensuring a co-ordinated approach to expand employer engagement across all types of learning provider, linked in to business development; our aim is to grow the market in a way that will create opportunities for all quality providers and to let employers better influence course design.

## STRATEGIC AIM 2: All Change for Crewe's connectivity and linkages

We aim to:

- Facilitate more sustainable transport movements within and around Crewe
- Fully leverage Crewe's strategic transport gateway status
- Deliver the new Strategic Highway Corridors that serve the High Growth City vision
- Establish a competitive and first rate Next Generation Broadband network across Crewe
- Develop stronger economic links to neighbouring city-regions.

It is widely accepted that effective transport systems support the productivity of urban areas, enabling deep and productive labour markets to develop, and allowing businesses to reap the benefits of agglomeration. Although Crewe has excellent external transport links by road and rail to key economic centres in the UK and strategic international gateways, we need to continue to promote the future development of these to ensure this connectivity advantage is maintained and wherever possible improved. This will include the works planned for the M6 and promoting the Expressway concept for the A500 and for the re-development of Crewe railway station along with maximising Crewe's role within the High Speed Rail Network.

We will ensure the delivery of a number of key infrastructure schemes such as the Crewe Green Link Road and 3 major pinch point schemes and are working hard to develop and deliver schemes on our new Strategic Highway Corridors that will all benefit the High Growth City plans.

In short, Crewe needs to establish stronger and more profitable connections/linkages with major centres of commerce/industry, services, knowledge, innovation, culture and strategic transport in the UK and further afield. As an ambitious and growth orientated town, we need to boost our existing efforts to maximise any competitive advantage that can be leveraged from our strategic road, rail, air and sea transport links.

Crewe is uniquely positioned within the UK rail and road network, with a hub station at Crewe being able to not only tap in to a passenger base of over 6 million people within 1 hours travel, but providing 360 degree rail connectivity and direct connections to the M6 growth corridor and wider road network.

Crewe's current and future role as one of the key intersections of the UK road and rail networks along with its significant highly skilled workforce, its well balanced land values, its major investment and development programme and the cross party support for growth and development within Crewe provides an unrivalled opportunity to deliver the vision of All Change for Crewe in the shape of Crewe taking its place as the UK's High Growth City.

In conclusion, we are not making the most of our accessible location and strong physical linkages, but have an unrivalled potential to do so. Furthermore, we also need to ensure that Crewe is actively engaged in high quality Information, Communication and Technology (ICT), knowledge and innovation networks through a competitive and dynamic broadband offer, as well as having strong links to leading HEIs and wider research facilities.

## OPERATIONAL AIMS

We will maintain and where feasible improve connections to key economic centres and international gateways, taking into account the need to reduce greenhouse emissions, by:

- Maximising Crewe's role within the High Speed Rail Network as a hub to connect to the HS2 line with the wider UK population centres and economies, maximising benefits to both Crewe and the wider UK economy,
- Working with partners to develop Crewe railway station as a high quality gateway to the town and to other parts of the UK through the West Coast Main Line (WCML).
- Establishing much stronger linkages to the neighbouring city-region networks including science, technology, innovation and business – as well as wider Northern Way policy agendas



- The early delivery of major transport related infrastructure schemes within Crewe and the wider M6 Growth Corridor including, but not limited to;
  - The development of the Crewe Green Link Road South, the last link in the road network which will massively improve traffic flows around the town and open up the town centre once again with work to commence in 2014 (subject to final review),
  - Delivering the Basford West Spine Road connecting Gresty Road with the A500,
  - Dualling 600m of the A500 leading up to the M6 junction to relieve the pinch point for traffic,
  - Realising the Congleton Link Road scheme to unlock traffic pinch points and growth as a result, and improve connectivity to Crewe and the surrounding South Cheshire region,
  - Delivering Crewe Rail Exchange: Phase 1, creating a new entrance to the station and accompanying car park, drop off space and public transport links,
  - Investing the Local Sustainable Transport Fund monies to fund new bus services, improvements to walking and cycling routes and new signage to link the station to the town centre,
  - Delivering a seamless and rapid link between Crewe Station and the heart of Crewe including its town centre, Coppenhall and other major sites as part of the wider delivery of the HS2 agenda,
  - Working with the Highways Agency and partners to improve the M6 junction and its accessibility and realise the implementation of a managed motorway project between M6 J16 and J19,
  - Realising enhancements to the Northern relief routes including A530 straightening, expansion to the Sydney Road Bridge and creating clear space within the town centre,
  - Maximising opportunities through investment of the emerging proposals for Community Infrastructure Levy funds.
- Ensuring Crewe has a robust and nationally-competitive Superfast Broadband infrastructure that effectively supports large-scale home-working, raises productivity levels within the local economy, helps to address local congestion issues as well as supporting mainstream service delivery improvements,
- Promoting Crewe to economic activities that are seeking locations with excellent national road and rail and international air and sea connections,
- Supporting further rail electrification to further improve services as well as reducing carbon emissions,
- Facilitating the development and use of rail-freight by Crewe-based businesses,

### STRATEGIC AIM 3: All Change for Crewe's physical development

We aim to:

- Deliver a vibrant and competitive town centre,
- Develop the Basford sites as regionally significant investment locations,
- Ensure the development of accompanying short to medium term employment sites to compliment the strategic sites at Basford, Leighton and Radnor Park,
- Support significant population growth and enhancement of the area's housing offer through fully integrated urban extensions that are well served through public transport and mainstream service provision.

Unlike other parts of Cheshire East and surrounding areas, Crewe has a significant amount of land that is not only available for employment, residential and leisure development, but has areas specifically identified with planning consent in place to take schemes forward.

Because of this and its excellent strategic transport links, the town has significant potential to cater sustainably for high levels of housing and employment-use related development. Indeed, there are already significant levels of developer interest in progressing new housing schemes in Crewe.

Attracting and retaining productive enterprises in Crewe relies in part on the quality of the business parks and premises that the town is able to offer. Ensuring an adequate supply of quality employment land is, therefore, a very important requirement of the strategic vision for Crewe. Crewe has some significant areas of brownfield or underused land that could provide locations for new, sustainable development of housing, community facilities and employment land. In some cases the private sector will be able to undertake such development alone, but in other cases partnership with the public sector may be needed to ensure the maximisation of benefits for Crewe and its residents.

Managing the expected growth of housing demand in Crewe – together with provision for the facilities and infrastructure that a growing population requires – will depend on the effective co-ordination of housing development in the town, as well as the provision of effective links to transport nodes and employment opportunities. It is also crucial that future housing development leads to the augmentation of the effective supply of community infrastructure (ideally incorporating some community-led and managed service provision) in Crewe, and does not result in added pressure on existing facilities and amenities as we seek to significantly increase the population of the town. Moreover, it is essential that the town is able to offer a full range of choice of living places capable of attracting workers in the knowledge industries upon which Crewe will increasingly depend.

Some areas of other development land on the periphery of Crewe have also been identified as being appropriate for realising the need for expansion and growth within Crewe. In some cases the bringing forward of these opportunities is likely to be dependent on significant upgrades to access and other local infrastructure such as utilities. Achieving these opportunities may require the case to be made for external funding support.

## OPERATIONAL AIMS

We will unlock the key development opportunities in Crewe by:

- Facilitating the successful redevelopment of a high quality retail and leisure offer in the town centre through an aligned development model that allows for a flexible and retailer led regeneration of the town centre to refresh the heart of Crewe,
- Enabling the co-ordinated release of development land for housing to meet the existing and future needs for growth, whilst ensuring that these developments are well connected by public and private transport to the wider strategic transport network, community facilities and employment areas. These developments will need to provide a full range of facilities and amenities required by their residents, or be capable of making adequate contributions to the funding of off-site facilities where this is more appropriate and ultimately be linked to the heart of Crewe to ensure the expansion of the town in a co-ordinated and structured way rather than by piecemeal unsustainable development,
- Delivering the substantial employment and investment opportunities that stand to be gained from the successful development of the Strategic Regional Site at Basford as a location for large scale and high value business investment from international and national occupiers, including a real focus on science-related business activity, automotive developments and major businesses,
- Working with key partners to release land in the short term for existing business expansion and freehold development to allow existing businesses and occupiers within Crewe to grow,
- Maximising the Councils use of its statutory powers to facilitate growth including putting in place supportive planning frameworks (LDO's, Local Plan allocations and similar), reducing regulatory burdens and looking at creative use of income such as business rates and similar to create attractive environments for investment and development.

#### **STRATEGIC AIM 4: All Change for Crewe's liveability, local transport and aspiration**

We aim to:

- Tackle deprivation in the round
- Improve mainstream Public Services across the board in Crewe
- Raise local aspiration levels
- Connect areas of opportunity with areas of need by developing effective local public transport networks.

Successful neighbourhoods need more than just the right housing – they need safe and attractive public spaces including parks and green spaces, local shops and leisure amenities, access to jobs and improved transport opportunities. They also need high quality and efficient services which are accessible to all.

Crewe as a whole performs reasonably well on key economic, social and environmental performance indicators. However, this picture masks severe and entrenched pockets of deprivation, most notably in the West End of the town. Within this area, quality of life and life choices are limited by poor health, low skills attainment, high worklessness, and low environmental quality.

The physical environment also poses particular challenges here in terms of poor condition housing and neglected and/or under-used buildings and poorly maintained open space. In addition, the legacy of dependence on a few major employers – for social infrastructure, as well as employment – has left a gap which the third and public sectors are struggling to fill. Without focused and sustained action to regenerate these areas and communities, there is a real risk that they will be excluded from future redevelopment plans and unable to contribute to and benefit from economic growth, requiring increased support services.

There is specific concern around some of Crewe's schools where educational attainment is below the national average. This contributes to an unacceptably high level of NEETs within deprived areas. Lacking the skills to enter the labour market will have real implications for the future prospects of young people in the town and prevent them from making a full contribution to its economy.

Improved access to employment support and training courses needs to be achieved through specifically targeted programmes. However, good physical access with effective public transport links will also be important. For any town to function well there needs to be good internal movement of both people and goods. Crewe's current internal transport system is constrained by the need to bridge the rail lines that dissect the town and a reliance on cars. As car ownership and use has grown so has internal congestion making the town less attractive and raising costs and pollutants. The low carbon agenda and limited resources means building new links or widening existing routes and bridges is unlikely to be feasible.

It is becoming more widely accepted that access to green-space and green infrastructure positively contributes to quality of life. Whilst Crewe is located near to open countryside, there is a lack of green-space within the town. An improved offer will improve the town's overall attractiveness to local residents, visitors and potential investors.



## OPERATIONAL AIMS

We will secure liveability excellence across Crewe by:

- Addressing the physical challenges in Crewe's West End and other deprived areas of the town through a specific focus on housing, local retail and the provision of higher quality green open space. Co-ordinated schemes for rejuvenating the area will be established in collaboration with private developers, businesses, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and local communities to provide a residential offer which meets the needs of existing and potential residents, developing Crewe into a residential location of choice.
- Improving opportunities for Crewe's children and young people through a specific focus on improving schools and addressing the challenge of local young people not in education, employment or training (NEET), particularly through the delivery of a cutting edge and aspirational UTC within the heart of Crewe which will offer a new model for learning and employment.
- Working with key voluntary and third sector partners such as ANTS at Queens Park to build on Crewe's strong sense of community and look at new models for promoting community engagement, involvement and leadership.
- Ensuring quality public transport links and addressing congestion between areas of opportunity and need to ensure that people in deprived areas can capitalise on the employment opportunities generated through increased economic growth. The biggest gains are likely to be achieved through a progressive approach embracing the smarter travel agenda, and looking at the opportunities High Speed Rail will create to investigate the feasibility of using new technology and considering radical traffic management measures to address congestion issues.

## STRATEGIC AIM 5: All Change for Crewe's image, perception and leadership

We aim to:

- Change outdated and negative perceptions of Crewe
- Significantly strengthen Crewe's leadership offer across all sectors (public, private and third).

Effective leadership, a strong image, as well as positive and modern perceptions are vital ingredients for long-term and sustainable economic success in Crewe. This cuts across all aspects of economic development activity, be this stimulated by the private, public, or community and voluntary sectors. Evidence suggests that in successful places, just as in successful businesses, there is a capable and committed leadership resource spanning all sectors. Furthermore, it is this leadership resource that will be tasked with establishing a robust and common sense of purpose amongst key stakeholders so that together, All Change for Crewe can be delivered effectively.

To that end the original All Change for Crewe vision established the creation of the "All Change for Crewe" brand, promoting use of the term and accompanying logo to act as a catch all banner for Crewe related regeneration and development to unify the approach.

The delivery of the High Growth City concept is a realisation of the All Change for Crewe vision and will look to continue the use of this brand and imagery to promote Crewe as a major place to do business, to live and invest.

## OPERATIONAL AIMS

We will enhance the image, perception and leadership offer across Crewe by:

- Working with partners across the public and private sector to continue the adoption of "All Change for Crewe" and the accompanying branding as the unifying mark of investment and regeneration within Crewe and the surrounding area to continue to promote the unique and exciting opportunities Crewe can offer,
- Devoting greater attention and energy to acquiring, developing and retaining premium leadership as a priority for the area,
- Supporting Crewe's leaders in intelligently looking forward, and consider how governance arrangements may need to change to better reflect and facilitate new types of leadership and new ways of working. This includes working with the All Change for Crewe Partnership Board to look at new and innovative delivery and resourcing models to support the development and growth of Crewe,



# KEY COMMITMENTS





**As a culmination of the evidence base, the Strategic Aims and the Operational Aims the Council and its partners are committed to releasing the massive potential within Crewe, and delivering the vision for Crewe: High Growth City by making 5 key commitments to the future of Crewe;**

#### **A World Class Automotive and Rail Hub –**

Working in partnership with Bentley Motors and other key players in the sector to create an Automotive Research, Development and Supply Hub in Crewe and accompanying rail centre of excellence, supported by a bespoke Growth Accelerator programme and strategic logistics centre, to capitalise on the £800 million investment announced by Bentley Motors in July, as well as Crewe's prestigious industrial heritage and skills base. Whilst the automotive hub will be based in a single location with good access to infrastructure and linkages to the wider area it is anticipated that the resulting development will kickstart a wider investment and uptake of automotive related investment in Crewe. Alongside this the Council will take the opportunity to work with existing and emerging businesses such as the Virgin Trains Academy, OSL Rail, Unipart and Atkins Rail to capitalise on Crewe's strong rail heritage and skills base to promote Crewe's role as a world class centre for rail technology and engineering. The Council will take an active role in looking to reduce statutory and financial burdens on businesses, recycle investment to further promote the sector and work with partners to create a supportive structure for investment in the automotive and rail sectors within Crewe and particularly in founding and developing the automotive hub. This will be linked to the wider agenda within the Governments Automotive Investment Office (AIO) and its role in facilitating growth within the sector and particularly this area, where the Council and partners will work directly with BIS, UKTI, AIO and others to co-ordinate investment, strategy and delivery on a sub regional and national scale within Crewe.

#### **A UK Centre of Excellence for Employer Led Skills –**

Developing Crewe as a national centre of excellence for engineering and manufacturing skills by working with industry leaders like Bentley Motors to build a genuinely employer-led approach. This includes delivery of Crewe's University Technical College, apprentice and workplace learning programmes to create a "work ready" local workforce. This will link to the wider programme of transformation in Crewe, where skills training will be aligned to the emerging needs of the market and

create the right opportunities to attract major new investment. This will be delivered by working closely with the existing education networks, the various stakeholders who are leading and delivering Governments skills agenda and primarily by the private sector employers within the Crewe area who will be given the direct opportunity to shape and develop the approach to education and learning in Crewe to create a cutting edge approach to skills and work readiness.

#### **A Market Leader in Renewable Energy –**

Realising the potential of the UK's first Deep Geothermal Energy Centre, including developing cutting edge research and development facilities, in order to position Crewe at the forefront of the global renewable energy agenda, securing new inward investment and growth. This renewable agenda will link directly to investment and development sites, with assistance and facilitation for renewable energy projects that support the wider growth in sectors like the automotive industry within Crewe.

**Connecting Crewe –** Delivering a £500 million investment programme to improve our road and rail infrastructure and maximise Crewe's massive connectivity opportunities which will create the right conditions for future growth and development. This will focus on realising the opportunities that HS2 will present for Crewe in creating a new major hub station, along with investing in and developing the wider network (both road and rail) to further enhance Crewe's connectivity and accessibility. This will include key projects such as A500 expressway (including dualling), M6 Junction 16 restructuring, Crewe Northern Growth Corridor, A530 improvements, M6 widening, Crewe Green Link Road South and the Basford Spine Road developments.

**Achievable and Sustainable Growth –** Creating the right mix of sites to drive employment and balanced housing growth in Crewe, ensuring we deliver the right types of development opportunities in the right places to support sustainable growth going forward. This will be delivered by working in partnership with communities, businesses and key stakeholders in Crewe to shape a viable and deliverable Local Plan, plans for investment and growth and by taking a proactive approach to inward investment.

These key projects cut across and address all of the Strategic and Operational Aims set out in this report, build on the actions outlined and set a priority list of areas to be addressed and ways in which the Council will take them forward within Crewe.



# ANNEXES

## Annex 1

### CREWE'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXT

Cheshire East Borough Council (The Council) is a unitary authority in the former County Council area of Cheshire. The Council was established on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 as part of structural changes to local government in England. The Council is formed of an amalgamation of the boroughs of Macclesfield, Congleton and Crewe and Nantwich.

The Office of National Statistics' (ONS) mid-2011 Population Estimates indicate that Crewe is the largest town in Cheshire East, with a population of 72,900. The vast majority of residents (47,600) are of working age (16-64). 14,300 are aged 15 or under; 11,000 are aged 65 or above.

In the town of Crewe, average household income is relatively low, as are qualification levels, and the town's unemployment rate is relatively high (see below). There are several neighbourhoods with very high unemployment rates, and several that suffer from significant deprivation.

CACI's Paycheck data for 2010 estimates Cheshire East's average (mean) income per household at £39,900 (13% above the Great Britain average of £35,300). However, Crewe has the lowest average income of any of the Borough's 24 main towns and settlements, at £32,000 (8.8% below the average for Great Britain). At ward level, mean household income is lowest (£23,200) in Crewe Central and also falls below £30,000 in five other Crewe wards (East, North, St Barnabas, South and West). Only one other Council ward (in Macclesfield) has a mean household income below £30,000.

Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are geographical areas developed by ONS for statistical purposes. LSOAs consist of former (pre-2009) wards or smaller (sub-ward) areas and originally had similar-sized populations (averaging about 1,500 at the time of their creation in 2004). Indices of Deprivation data indicate that, of the sixteen Cheshire East LSOAs that rank among the England's worst 20% for overall (IMD) deprivation, eleven are in Crewe. Five LSOAs, all of them in Crewe, rank among England's most deprived 10%, though none of these are in the top (most deprived) 5% nationally. Of the 47 LSOAs in Crewe, ten rank among England's worst 20% for employment deprivation (one of which is in among the worst 5%). 17 Crewe LSOAs are among England's worst 20% for education, skills and training deprivation – including one that is among the worst 0.5% nationally – whilst nine are in England's "top" (worst) 20% of LSOAs for crime.

ONS data also show that, in Crewe as a whole, 2,043 people were claiming Jobseeker's Allowance as of March 2013, which equates to 4.3% of the working-age (16-64) population. This is above the average for the UK (3.9%) and well above the Cheshire East figure (2.5%), but slightly lower than the North West's claimant unemployment rate (4.4%). However, in thirteen of the town's 47 LSOAs, the rate is 6% or more and in two of these LSOAs, it reaches 10%.

2011 Census data indicate that, of the nine wards that lie partly or entirely within Crewe, there are five (Central, East, North, St Barnabas and West) where 27% or more of those aged 16+ lack any qualifications. In this sense, these five wards fare worse than the North West (25%) and England & Wales (23%) and in one of them, St Barnabas, the proportion exceeds 35%. Conversely, the proportion of residents aged 16+ who have a qualification at or above Level 4 (first degree level) is 15% or less in four of these wards, which is well below the North West average of 24%.

The Cheshire, Halton & Warrington Econometric Model's (CHWEM's) latest forecasts (produced in 2012) predict that the former Crewe & Nantwich District's economic output, measured as Gross Value Added (GVA) will grow by an average of 2.1% per annum during 2009-25, which is below the rates expected for Cheshire East as a whole (2.7% per annum), the North West (2.5%) and the UK (2.6%). In addition, CHWEM forecasts suggest that employment in Crewe & Nantwich will contract by an annual average of 0.4% per annum between 2009 and 2025, which again compares unfavourably to the outlook for Cheshire East (0.1% fall per annum), the region (0.1% growth) and the UK (0.4% growth).

*Analysis of the 2011 Cheshire and Warrington Business Needs Survey found that 15% of Crewe businesses identified traffic congestion as a disadvantage of their local authority area, in contrast to 6% for other Cheshire and Warrington firms. The survey also found that Crewe firms were less likely to cite access to transport links as being an advantage of their location (50% did), than businesses elsewhere in Cheshire and Warrington (61%).*

Looking more widely the National Government identifies the critical need for growth to stimulate the UK economy, and the key role infrastructure plays in facilitating development. Particularly, in the Written Ministerial Statement: Planning for Growth (23 March 2011), the then Minister for Decentralisation and Local Growth, Greg Clark outlined that “*Local planning authorities should support enterprise and facilitate housing, economic and other forms of sustainable development*”.

The Council has actively promoted and looked to deliver the Governments “agenda for growth” by looking to identify and bring forward key strategic sites across the local authority area in order to expedite growth and development. This report sets out one key strand in the approach to how the Council and its partners will deliver this growth agenda within Crewe.

More widely, despite being a key economic driver in Cheshire East, significant challenges for Crewe remain around:

- a relatively low skilled workforce which impacts negatively on the overall earnings of the town’s workforce
- pockets of high unemployment in particular areas of the town
- the size of the business base and the extent to which Crewe’s businesses are knowledge-based and technology focused, which generally impacts negatively on the amount of wealth that they are able to generate for the local economy.

Looking towards the future, the productivity gap between Crewe and the rest of the UK is projected to rise if targeted action is not taken. In the absence of All Change for Crewe, GVA per job is projected to fall further to 89% of the UK level (compared to 90% regionally) by 2020, whilst employment growth will be sluggish at best. Sectors such as computing and other business services are likely to see growth in terms of both jobs and GVA, whilst at the same time; there will be further contractions in the heavy industries and agriculture.

Although Crewe is an important business location in Cheshire East and crucially has significant capacity for growth in the future given its sizeable bank of land that is potentially suitable for development, the rate of new business formation lags behind that achieved elsewhere. In 2007, there were 54 new business registrations per 10,000 of the working age population in Crewe and Nantwich compared to 70 across wider Cheshire East. In addition, just 13% of firms in Crewe and Nantwich were identified as Knowledge Intensive Businesses (KIBs) compared with 16% across Cheshire East.

Underlying this, Crewe has a significant pent up demand for industrial, retailing and manufacturing space. Between April 2011 and August 2013 the Council received over 100 queries by prospective developers looking for development space of over 3000 square foot (classified as large developments), and over 350 queries from those seeking a wider variety of space. The majority of these queries related to searches for freehold land which could be developed over an 18 month to 2 year window from the date of the query. Where the Council was able to meet those needs and connect the prospective developers with appropriate land owners there were a significant number of these queries that couldn’t be progressed due to a lack of appropriately available employment land for short term development within Crewe.

This points towards a need to improve the attractiveness of Crewe, to develop its core ‘product’ and actively market the locality as a business location of choice for the 21st Century entrepreneur. Recent announcements concerning High Speed Rail, Bentley Motors and future plans for growth in Crewe will help to improve the town’s offer and help to bolster local advanced engineering and related sectors. At the same time the important role played by existing firms in the local economy cannot be forgotten. These major employers and investors who are committed to Crewe will require continued support to ensure they are able to flourish and compete over the longer-term, and there is space available outside the strategic employment sites for the small and medium sized operations to expand on a freehold or similar basis whilst the larger operators orientate themselves to the strategic investment sites at Basford, Leighton and Radnor Park.

Increasingly, global economic success is tied to the science, engineering, and technology (SET) occupations, as the ability to master and wield new technology is the black box of economic growth. However, models for future skills demand are predicting shortages of SET qualified people for areas where demand is driven by expansion – namely advanced engineering subsectors such as automotive manufacturing, a key sector in Crewe and the vision for Crewe as the UK’s High Growth City.

### SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT

Although employment levels in Crewe are generally positive, jobs are all too often in those occupations which tend to pay low wages, reflecting the low skills profile of Crewe's workforce.

In Britain there are distinct skills shortages and high levels of youth unemployment. Other nations such as China and India are heavily investing in vocational, industrial skills that will translate into economic growth, as higher skill levels equate directly to higher labour productivity and enable countries to adopt new technologies. For the UK, it is a challenge to compete.

British businesses and their employees can benefit from increased trade and new export markets, but only if they have the skills to be globally competitive. Currently, the UK economy is skewed towards services, which accounted for 78% of output in 2012. This is imbalanced compared to other leading and emerging economies, where industrial output is higher. Germany (71%), India (55%), and China (43%) all have less of their economies devoted to services and more to industry, underpinned by advanced engineering. The recession has made the need for high value-added, high-technology, sustainable engineering and manufacturing all the more evident if the UK wants to compete.

Moreover, the UK's gross investment in Research and Development was just 1.8% in 2010 compared with 2.8% in Germany and 3.2% in the US. Accordingly, the US produces 4 times as many engineering graduates than the UK, whilst the India produces eight times as many, and China twenty times. As such, the ability to compete on a global economic stage is increasingly being defined by a nation's ability to produce engineers to drive industrial innovation and drive key economic sectors.

To raise more skilled engineers, a more focused and technically-specified educational offering is needed in this country. Currently, there is a dearth of engineering competencies, reflected in the fact that engineering occupations tend to carry a 15% wage premium in the UK and 19% for STEM skills overall, indicating their rarity and high value-added economic potential. It is therefore vital to provide concerted engineering training as early as possible to deliver the skills the UK needs.

Increasingly, global economic success is tied to the science, engineering, and technology (SET) occupations, as the ability to master and wield new technology is the black box of economic growth. However, models for future skills demand are predicting shortages of SET qualified people for areas where demand is driven by expansion – namely advanced engineering subsectors such as automotive manufacturing, a key sector in Crewe and the vision for Crewe as the UK's High Growth City.

The Royal Academy of Engineering, using sectoral analyses from the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES), estimated that between 2012-2020 there will be a need for an additional 110,000 SET professionals and 70,000 SET technicians through industrial expansion alone. In that same period, we can estimate that 90,000 SET professionals and 50,000 SET technicians will be lost through retirement. The total forecast employment demand for 2012-2020 is 830,000 SET professionals and 450,000 SET technicians. The majority of these (80%) are in engineering or IT occupations.

The (UKCES) anticipates that manufacturing, electronic and precision engineering are expected to increase by 2.6% and 2.5% respectively per annum, and there needs to be a skilled workforce to meet this demand. The country has little precedent for producing this many engineers, with the aforementioned sectors dropping by -3.5% and -3.9% per annum respectively between 1990-2010. However, it is anticipated that these sectors will suffer further decline in 2010-2020, dropping by -0.6% and -1.9% annually. The top ten manufactured products by value in the UK are all connected with motor vehicles, medicaments, aircraft, or food and drink.

As such, the UK is poorly equipped to generate the engineers it needs to become a global economic powerhouse. Indeed, it may struggle to sustain its current economic performance without more engineers, given that automotive and aerospace manufactured products feature in the top ten most valuable UK products.

To meet the SET skills need for 2012-20, the UK needs to produce over 100,000 STEM graduates per year and circa 60,000 individuals with Level 3+ STEM qualifications. However, research by the



Royal Academy of Engineering indicates that the UK produces only 90,000 STEM graduates per year, many of whom are international students who do not go on to work in the UK and so home-grown UK engineers with strong ties to local industries are required to incubate and retain the necessary skills.

Moreover, the CBI Education and Skills Survey found that the UK sectors that were least confident in being able to access highly-skilled employees in the future were manufacturing and engineering, hi-tech/IT, and science. Among those businesses aiming to recruit staff with STEM skills, nearly half (45%) anticipate difficulties over the next three years. Nearly a third of manufacturing firms report difficulties in acquiring appropriately skilled people. Although apprenticeship schemes are popular and well-applied for, 20% of manufacturers report difficulties in attracting applicants with the right skills.

This is echoed amongst engineering companies local to Cheshire East. Indeed, the biggest problems experienced in recruiting STEM-skilled staff is lack of general workplace experience (42%), perhaps indicating a lack of engagement with businesses or business focus in their education, and weaknesses in core employability skills (39%). 35% percent report a lack of interested applicants and 34% say that the STEM applicants are not of sufficient calibre. 53% of manufacturing employers, 48% of construction, and 50% of engineering/IT/science believe that higher-quality work placements are required to bridge the gap between education and work.

Cheshire East is a chequered region where standards of educational provision, aspiration, and youth employment vary widely. In 2012 there was a higher average proportion of the 16-24 age group with no qualifications in Cheshire East (9.4%) than in Great Britain as a whole (8.5%). Moreover, the percentage of 16-19 years olds with no qualifications was higher in Cheshire East than the national average: 13.8% compared with 11.7%.

Similarly, NOMIS has modelled Cheshire East's 16-24 population as:

- Below the national average in terms of qualification up to NVQ Level 1: 8.4% compared to a national average of 13.4%.
- Fractionally below the national average for NVQ Level 3: 29.2% compared to a national average of 29.5%
- Below the national average for attainment of degrees (NVQ Level 4): 12% compared to a national average of 16%.

Finally, there are a lower proportion of 16-64 year old residents undertaking apprenticeships in Cheshire East (2.5%) compared to the national average (3.7%) and that of Cheshire East's closest neighbours (4.1%).

These trends culminated in the results of the 2011 Cheshire Business Needs Survey, which identified that the chief reason Cheshire East businesses failed to fill vacancies was because there were not sufficient applicants with the desired skills. If such trends continue there will be a particular challenge for the education system – these young people will be ill-equipped to succeed in a labour market where skill requirements are expected to continue to rise. This problem of youth skills is resulting in an ever-widening skills gap in Cheshire East as school leavers mature. From 2007 to 2010 the skills gap, as recorded in the Employee's surveys, had risen from 12.1% to 19.9%. These surveys indicate that, aside from our partner businesses, there is a wider skills problem in the Cheshire East business community that needs to be resolved with a more focused and applied approach to skills provision.

Moreover, many areas of skills deprivation overlap unfavourably with the catchment areas for the identified high-potential industries. Crewe and Nantwich, a primary recruitment zone for advanced engineering and manufacturing industries such as Bentley, has an above average proportion (23%) of Lower Layer Super Output Areas in the region. 8 of the 10 LSAOs in Cheshire East with the highest percentage of adults with no or low qualifications are in Crewe; this correlates with the highest recorded levels of deprivation (see section on deprivation). 7 of these LSAOs fall within the bottom 15% nationally for lack of skills, with 3 in the bottom 10%.

Crewe and Nantwich is also notably below the national average in terms of 16-64s qualified to NVQ Level 4 (degree level) and has the largest number of firms with identified skills gaps in the region at 17.7%. Low skill levels preclude unemployed residents from many job opportunities and limit the contribution that employed residents can make to local industries.

Going forward, it is likely that the town's businesses will increasingly require more highly-skilled and productive workers. Indeed, this will be key if Crewe is to remain competitive in an increasingly globalised and interlinked economy.

In short, not enough of our residents are engaged in high end and well paid occupations such as managerial and senior official positions. This, arguably, reflects the skills profile of residents.

In order to maximise the potential of all our workers, we need to:

Continue to restructure our economy, targeting higher growth and higher value sectors in particular so that our workers have greater access to suitable opportunities to earn more and progress to more senior roles

Improve the performance of our primary and secondary schools so that more of our students are equipped with the skills, aptitudes and qualifications - as well as having the ambition and aspiration - required for long-term success. We must also encourage more of our school-leavers to go to university and to obtain degrees

## Annex 3

### MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE

Congestion is a considerable issue both in Crewe's town centre and outside of the core urban area. The M6 motorway is currently operating over capacity. Some 114,000 vehicles per day use the stretch of the M6 around Crewe despite its original design capacity of 72,000 cars per day. In addition, the A534 and A532 roads which pass through Crewe's town centre suffer from congestion limiting the movements of both cars and buses, and affecting the reliability of local road-based public transport services.

Crewe owes its development as an urban centre to the railways. Crewe was, and to some extent remains, a 'railway town'. Its development as an urban centre in the 19th Century arose solely as a result of the decision to locate an interchange in the then small village for rail links between Liverpool, London, and Birmingham. The railway required workers, and the Grand Junction Railway company built the town to accommodate them. Around this, cloth making, printing, brick-making, and chemicals industries also started to develop and in the mid-1940s Rolls Royce, which had recently acquired Bentley Motors, decided to move its car production from Derby and London to a new purpose-built factory at Crewe. Bentley, in spite of changing ownership since this time on a number of occasions, has remained at Crewe and now employs around 3,500 workers in the town with plans for significant growth.

Through its widely accepted status as 'gateway to the north', Crewe plays a key role in linking the North West region, its workers and communities to the West Midlands, North Wales, Greater South East and beyond. Despite experiencing ongoing restructuring as discussed in greater detail later in this section, the legacy of the area means that Crewe as an economy remains distinct from, and relatively loosely tied into, the wider Cheshire context in which it sits.

Whilst Crewe's rail heritage helped the town to develop and grow over previous centuries and decades, as the nature of industrial processes and manufacturing has shifted, Crewe has had difficulty adapting.

Physically Crewe is intersected by and structured around its rail heritage, with multiple lines and banks of sidings cutting through significant portions of the town and creating distinct physical barriers to movement. These, in turn, have impacted on the nature and ability of Crewe to grow and adapt. For example, whilst suitable for their original purposes in the Victorian and subsequent eras, the scale and number of road crossings / bridges over the rail lines within Crewe are unsuitable for modern usage and volumes of traffic. This helps to create significant congestion and disruption.

At a national level, the key linkages between transport and economic development have been highlighted by the Eddington review (2008). Particularly, this report and the resulting studies and supporting evidence highlight that there are direct economic benefits that arise from firms being in close proximity or having high levels of accessibility.

The proximity and ease of accessibility of other firms, workers and consumers has a direct impact on assisting firms with their business activity and growth. The implication is that business productivity will rise as the access to consumers and resources improves through an enhancement of linkages and accessibility. This can be as simple as consumers being able to reach a business more readily and therefore making more frequent use of services, or as advanced as ease of access allowing a sharing of resources and intelligence more readily between businesses, leading to improvements in innovation and development (economies of agglomeration).

Crewe's physical severing and the resulting limits on accessibility, particularly congestion within the town-centre areas and congestion on the access to key motorway junctions, is therefore directly impacting on the ability of its businesses to benefit from proximity and accessibility. This has a negative impact on productivity and growth.

Whereas in other competing urban economies the highway accessibility and network allows easy access for consumers and suppliers along with improved access for the workforce, in Crewe the limits imposed by the existing infrastructure sever these potential links between businesses, their suppliers, their consumers and their workforce. As a result this impacts not only the potential for future growth and development within Crewe, but also on the existing businesses and operators.

A mix of infrastructure projects, promotion of a modal shift and new traffic management measures are required to improve access and through-flow for residents and workers alike. Linked to this, the increasing prominence of the low-carbon agenda and expanding population and jobs points towards a need to ensure that mobility within and around Crewe is future proofed through a broad range of measures including the promotion of behavioural shifts.

The creation of a HS2 hub in Crewe will allow a quantum shift in the dynamics of the Crewe economy. The current economy is focused on the advanced engineering and manufacturing sectors, with a number of notable successes, not least of which being the recent announcement of over £800m of investment and the creation of over 1,000 new jobs as part of Bentley Motors decision to build their cutting edge SUV car in Crewe.

However a rapid link to London and other major cities, coupled with excellent motorway network connections, evidence of significant latent demand in the economy and attractive land values creates a perfect combination to attract decentralised office markets, regional hub employers and major retailing.

Crewe is the only place within the North West that will truly create the opportunity for decentralisation of the economy outside of London and the South East, creating a place where major employers can easily and rapidly locate office operations, call centres, staff hubs, logistics operations and R&D environments, whilst still having the direct and rapid connectivity to the City of London and their South East headquarters that will be provided by HS2, along with direct connections to both road and rail logistics networks.

Where other locations may offer one or two of these things, Crewe is the only place in the UK that can genuinely offer businesses and investors the perfect combination of affordable land values, significant connectivity and attractive settings to provide a real and viable relocation offer, and the ability to split their working operations across sites, capitalising on the benefits of Crewe whilst still having central offices or marketing sites in London, Manchester and elsewhere.

Indeed, this is one of the reasons why Bentley Motors Ltd, despite maintaining small office locations elsewhere (such as London), choose to keep their key operations in Crewe, including all senior management. It is a perfect working example of the dual centred economy Crewe can and will offer.



## Annex 4

### PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

#### CREWE TOWN CENTRE

Crewe's town centre is at its heart and the town's long-term economic competitiveness and success depends on significantly enhancing and better integrating its offer. The town centre itself is limited in scope, serving primarily local needs shopping and specialist units (such as banking and professional services) where the major retailers are located out of town in the Grand Junction Retail Park development.

Presently, the 'quality of place' of the town centre and of Crewe more widely is poor and needs to be upgraded and modernised to improve residents, visitors and investors' perceptions of the town along with modifying and revising the footplates of units in the town centre to create more flexible and versatile town centre sites for development. Securing a successful town centre through an attractive and ambitious, yet deliverable, scheme will provide a larger and richer source of additional enterprise as well as job and training opportunities for Crewe's residents.

This enhancement of the town centre would need to be complimented by implementing an attractive and efficient transport system – through the potential redevelopment of the bus station and restoration of the efficient functioning and physical appearance of the railway station and its connections to the town centre – will work towards this goal.

#### BASFORD DEVELOPMENT SITE

The delivery of the Basford Development Sites is one of the Council's key regeneration and economic growth priorities, a scheme that by virtue of its nature, location and quantum of development will have a transformational impact on Crewe and the surrounding area.

The vision, as identified in "All Change for Crewe: Crewe's Strategic Framework for Economic Growth 2010 - 2030 Final Report 3 - The Action Plan" - extracts is set out below.

*Basford was identified as one of the North West's Strategic Regional Sites soon after the formation of the NWDA in 1999 (continuing until its closure in 2012). The allocation of Basford East and West as major employment sites of regional significance potentially provides a major flagship business park and employment generating scheme for Crewe and East Cheshire. The two sites together provide around 150 hectares of development opportunity for B1, B2 and B8 uses, and therefore present a significant opportunity because of their size and strategic location.*

*The objective at Basford is to create a nationally and regionally important commercial asset including the following elements:*

- a science-orientated business and innovation park providing start-up and grow-on space for knowledge-driven enterprises*
- high quality business park accommodation providing the opportunity to attract headquarters and other high order business functions*
- other high quality business accommodation across the range of B1, B2 and B8 uses*
- the creation of a regional logistics park asset at Basford West.*

*The strategy for the Basford sites will result in a wide range of benefits, including the following:*

- the development of a large bank of modern commercial floorspace including offices, industrial units and warehousing*
- key strategic commercial property asset capable of attracting high quality investment from international and national investors, including:*
- science and high-knowledge sectors (including identified priority sectors for the sub-region)*
- plus other high value business sectors*
- headquarters and other command-and-control functions from any sector.*

*As a result of these developments it is expected that there will be economic benefits manifested in:*

- *achieving the long-held strategic objective of developing a key regional land and property asset at Basford*
- *direct and indirect employment generation*
- *additional economic output (GVA).*

This vision for the development and delivery of the Basford sites has lain at the heart not only of the Council's vision for growth and regeneration within Crewe, but also at the core of the North West Development Agency's (NWDA's) and later its successor, the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership's (CWLEP's) strategic priority, with the scheme and its supporting infrastructure recognised by Central Government in its 2011 National Infrastructure Plan as essential to realise this vision for growth.

The development of Basford East was included within the draft Crewe Town Strategy as being suitable for mixed-use development, to facilitate the development of the site for employment purposes and the delivery of about 4,000 jobs. The site could also deliver around 1,000 dwellings; a local centre; hotel; GP surgery; petrol filling station and a primary school. The delivery of the site is important to the achievement of the Vision within the draft Town Strategy and within 'All Change for Crewe', as well as central Government's wish to see more sustainable development.

Funding has been secured for the realisation of major infrastructure links to and through both the Basford East and West sites, opening up both locations for direct development, alongside ongoing investment in electricity supply and sewerage connections that are delivering the underlying structure on which the Basford vision will be realised.

With an agreed delivery plan in place, funding on stream and work underway, the development of the Basford sites will realise a massive opportunity for the expansion and growth of Crewe, creating major investment and development areas led by employment and job creation.

### COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

As is the case in many successful urban areas, Crewe suffers from pockets of deprivation such as those that lie towards the West End of the town. Communities facing hardship need intensive support so that they are able to contribute to, and benefit from, future economic growth in the town and surrounding economies. This includes the young people of Crewe.

The proportion of 16 to 18 year olds Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in October 2009 stood at 8.8% in Crewe compared to just 5.6% across Cheshire East. Addressing under-performance in some of the area's primary and secondary schools will be a vital first step in reducing the number of NEETs and consequently fourth generation benefit dependants. Poor health, low aspirations, comparatively high levels of crime and a lack of green open space are all aspects to be addressed if communities are to prosper and flourish in Crewe.

Tackling issues around the prevalence of poor quality housing alongside the wider residential environment, amenities, cultural, creative and leisure offer by expanding the range and choice available in deprived areas will help to lift these communities out of poverty. Strengthening the local Third Sector infrastructure and empowering communities across Crewe will also be important.

Generating significant improvements in mainstream public service delivery whilst providing real efficiency savings is never an easy task. It is vital however, that despite the ongoing public sector budget cuts, stakeholders across Crewe strive to deliver an enhanced quality of life offer locally for both Crewe's existing communities but also for future residents and workers.

Existing local neighbourhood engagement activities already underway could be further progressed, bolstered and rolled-out across the town. Exploring the potential to provide further opportunities for community empowerment through community-led, managed, developed or owned assets as well as other means, may play an important role.

## SUPPORTING EVIDENCE

The development of both the original All Change for Crewe Strategy by SQW Consultants and this refresh and revitalisation of that document is based on a significant supporting evidence base which includes the following documents;

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