



Economic Growth Strategy 2020-25

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1.

Foreword

Warwickshire has a strong economy which continues to grow. Since the end of the 2008/09 recession the county has seen some of the highest economic growth in the country, due to the strength, depth and diversity of its business expertise.

This growth has led to our employment rate reaching its highest levels this century while unemployment dropped to its lowest levels. In a number of sectors, Warwickshire has become a 'go-to' location - not just for businesses within the UK but internationally. We have so much to be proud of.

A prime reason for that enviable position is the ability of businesses - and organisations like ourselves which strive to support them - to constantly meet evolving challenges. Especially in the tech sector in which Warwickshire is a leader, it is vital to move with or, ideally, ahead of the times. There is no time to sit on your laurels.

Businesses small and large, across the sectors in all parts of Warwickshire, never do that. Neither

do we at Warwickshire County Council and that is why we have compiled this Economic Growth Strategy through to 2025.

The Strategy outlines in detail how we will deliver one of the three priority outcomes in the Council Plan: "That Warwickshire's economy is vibrant and supported by the right jobs, training, skills and infrastructure." It is our aspiration to become the UK's top-performing shire county.

We will continue to trigger, encourage and drive business growth while tackling the Skills Gap and maximising career opportunities for our young people. Warwickshire's economy is strong - let's all work together to make it stronger.



Cllr Izzi Seccombe
Leader and Portfolio
Holder for Economic
Development

1.

Foreword

Warwickshire County Council recognises the importance of a strong local economy and this document sets out in detail our Strategy for the five years which immediately follow a time of uncertainty in the UK.

Many businesses have told us over the last three years that the backdrop of uncertainty over Brexit was not helpful. In those circumstances, for Warwickshire's economy to have entered 2020 in a position of such strength is real testament to the skills and resilience of our business community.

Now the priority is to further strengthen. This Strategy outlines our objectives for the next five years as we strive to build on the sectors and areas where the county is strong and address the challenges where they remain.

I am very proud of all the staff we have working on economic growth activities across Warwickshire County Council, and the experience, knowledge, skills and sheer hard work they pour into supporting employers and education-providers

throughout the county. We will continue to work hard, in partnership with other organisations, to sustain growth in Warwickshire.

Our relatively small county is a major contributor to the region's economy. It is our intention that Warwickshire remains an integral part of the economic powerhouse that is the West Midlands.

This Strategy lays out how we will deliver that intention while addressing the short-term uncertainties which remain from Brexit and longer-term priorities such as climate change.



Monica Fogarty
Chief Executive
Warwickshire
County Council

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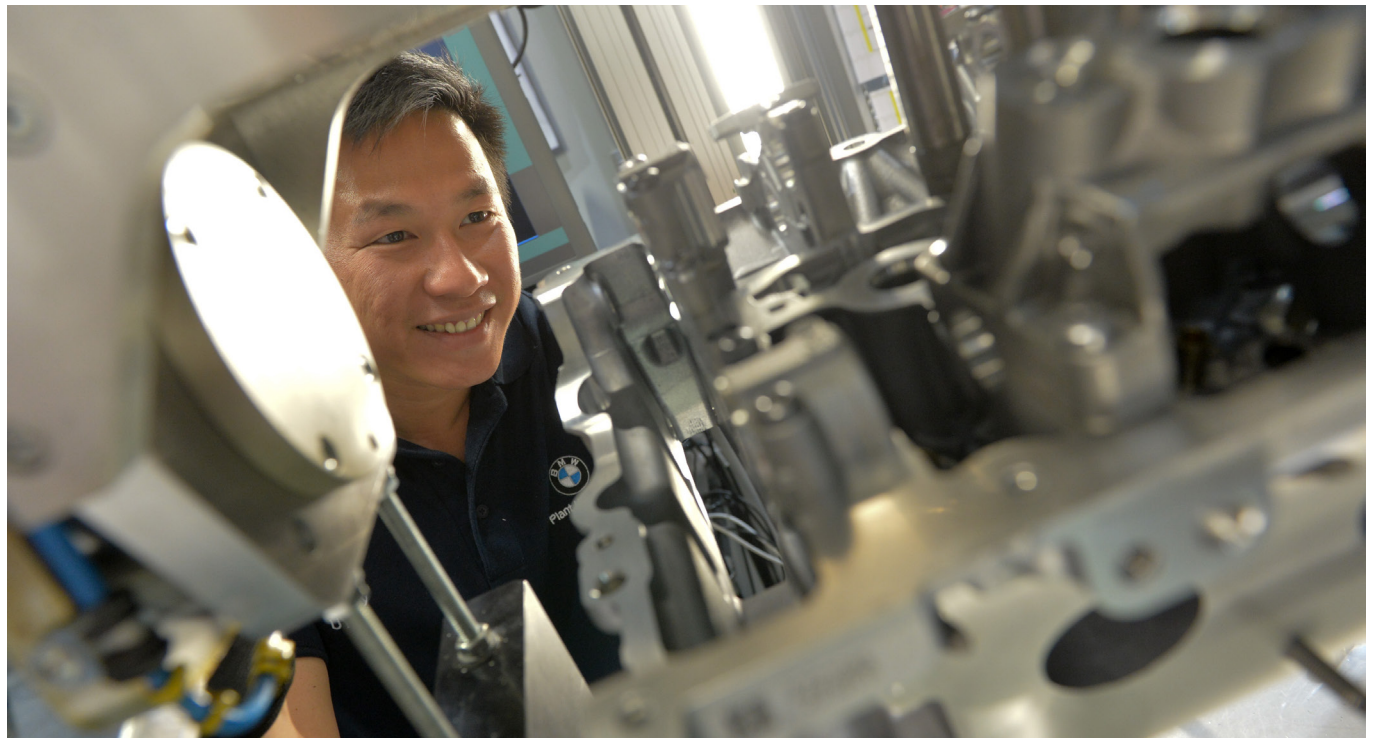
Why do we need an economic growth strategy?

Warwickshire has a strong and growing economy. Indeed, since the end of the 2008-2009 recession, the County has experienced some of the strongest economic growth (as measured by Gross Value Added) of any upper local authority in the country. Warwickshire sits on the edge of both the manufacturing heartland of the Midlands and the knowledge-intensive more service sector-based economy of the South East, and in many ways acts as a bridge between the two. It is, therefore, no coincidence that the area is becoming globally renowned for its strength and depth in the automotive technology sector, marrying innovation, technology, digital and manufacturing and leading the way in future mobility. Warwickshire is also home to one of the UK's strongest clusters of gaming companies in and around Leamington Spa (dubbed "Silicon Spa" as a result), which is driving wider growth in the digital creative sector; and has long been a focus for the UK tourism industry given our unique history through William Shakespeare and assets such as Warwick Castle.

This growth in the economy has led to a very strong labour market, with our employment rate (the proportion of working age residents in employment) rising strongly to the highest levels seen this century, and unemployment falling to its lowest levels. Warwickshire's employment rate now stands at 80.2% (up from 77.7% in 2015/ 2016) which is 4.6% above the national average whereas unemployment

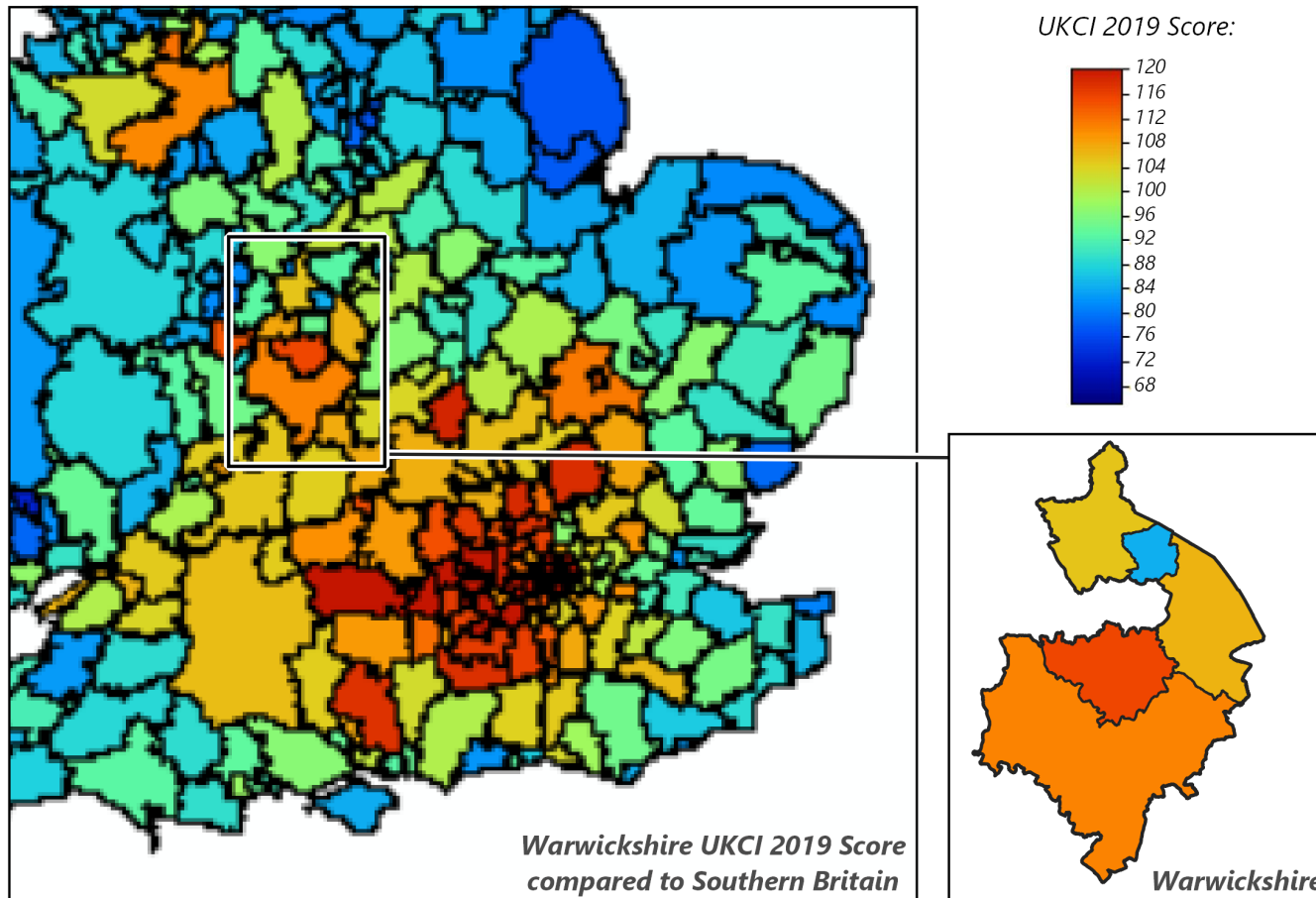
is just 2.3% compared to 3.8% nationally. The number of job vacancies in Warwickshire posted online has also been growing significantly, and the ratio of vacancies to the working population is significantly above – and almost double – the national average. Warwickshire had 227 job vacancies per 1,000

population in 2018 compared to 121 job vacancies per 1,000 population nationally. Median residential earnings have also been growing with four of our five district and borough areas (and Warwickshire overall) now having median residential earnings which are above the national average.



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The 2019 UK Competitiveness Index – which benchmarks the competitiveness of local authority areas across a range of economic indicators to give an overall score - shows the strong performance of the Warwickshire economy as well as the huge variation across the county.



However, challenges remain. There is significant diversity across the county and highly variable levels of economic performance. Warwick District is the 37th most economically competitive local authority area out of 379 areas nationally according to the recent UK Competitiveness Index produced by the University of Cardiff and Nottingham Business School – and the highest-ranking area in the whole of the West Midlands. Stratford-on-Avon (54th), Rugby (76th) and North Warwickshire (84th) are also ranked in the top 100. In contrast, Nuneaton and Bedworth is ranked 300th nationally – and the worst-ranking area in the West Midlands. Similarly, Gross Value Added (GVA) per head of population in Nuneaton and Bedworth is just one third that of Warwick District.

At the same time, whilst Warwickshire has seen strong rates of growth, it still lags significantly behind better performing areas in the wider South East economy. Warwickshire's GVA per head has grown by 43.96% since 2009 compared to growth of 16.57% and 28.03% in Berkshire and Oxfordshire respectively. However, these two areas still have GVA per head of £41,727 and £34,016 compared to GVA per head in Warwickshire of £30,245.

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Warwickshire therefore needs to continue to build on and maximise its economic strengths, whilst also addressing areas of under-performance in order to fulfil our full potential. We also need to ensure that Warwickshire's economy is ready and able to embrace future economic, social and environmental changes and opportunities, both in the shorter term as we deal with the uncertainties around future trading arrangements following Brexit, and in the longer term through climate change and continued technological advancements.

Warwickshire County Council recognises the importance of a strong local economy. A strong local economy creates wealth and prosperity whilst creating jobs for our residents and generating tax revenue. Work – as recognised in the Director of Public Health Annual Report 2019 – is proven to make people, on the whole, happier and healthier thus reducing demands on WCC (and other public) services.

The Council Plan 2025 has a clear vision to make Warwickshire the best it can be, sustainable now and for future generations. This Economic Growth Strategy sets out how the County Council will deliver one of the three priority outcomes in the Council Plan – that “Warwickshire's economy is vibrant and supported by the right jobs, training, skills and infrastructure”.

Our ambition is for the strong economic growth that Warwickshire has experienced over the past decade to continue into the future, and that our levels of productivity both soon exceed the national average and also achieve parity with the best performing local economic areas in the South East of England.

However, we do not want this growth at any cost. We also want the county to take a path that is sustainable and inclusive. We will strive to ensure that we move towards a low carbon future, and that the whole of the population of Warwickshire benefits from the economic growth secured.



This Strategy sets out the priorities and high-level actions that the County Council will undertake to achieve this key corporate priority and ambition. It also sets out our approach including the importance of working with our partners. However, this is not an economic strategy for the whole of Warwickshire. Other strategies play this role either across a larger geographical area (i.e. the West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy, or the Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership's priorities) or at a local level (i.e. Stratford-on-Avon's Industrial Strategy), and it is important that this strategy both connects with and influences the development and implementation of these wider plans.

The Warwickshire economy also makes a major contribution to the performance of these larger economic areas. The Strategy and associated action plan, therefore, seek to set out the contribution that the County Council can make to the implementation of wider economic strategies such as the West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy (and indeed the Government's national growth agenda) whilst recognising and promoting our particular needs and opportunities. Similarly, the Strategy and action plan set out the role the County Council plays in supporting economic growth at the local level.

Finally, the Strategy sets out how it can support – or influence – the delivery of other County Council or Warwickshire-wide strategies and plans. These strategies and plans include:

- WCC's Capital Strategy
2020-2030 – Investing in Warwickshire
- WCC's Commercial Strategy
- WCC's Visitor Economy
Forward Plan 2018-2022
- Warwickshire Education Strategy 2018-2023
- Warwickshire Careers Strategy
2019/ 2020 – 2024/ 2025
- Warwickshire's Health and
Wellbeing Strategy (2018-2020 Refresh)
- Connecting Communities: WCC's Voluntary and
Community Sector Strategy 2020-2025
- Warwickshire's Heritage &
Culture Strategy 2020-2025
- Warwickshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026
- Warwickshire Rail Strategy 2019-2034
- WCC's Electric Vehicle Charging
Infrastructure Strategy 2017-2026
- WCC Digital Infrastructure Strategy
- WCC's work on Climate Change
Mitigation & Adaptation



3.

Our Key Priorities For The Warwickshire Economy

1

Maximising the county's economic strengths – building on our particular strengths in relation to automotive technology, advanced manufacturing, digital creative, video game development and tourism.

Building on a review of the evidence, consideration of the key issues and opportunities and discussion with key stakeholders and partners, we have identified seven key priorities for the Warwickshire economy.

Warwickshire has a number of recognised national and international strengths. We are home to the largest concentration of automotive technology activity in the UK, directly employing over 35,000 people in the wider sub-region. Uniquely in the UK, it is possible – through the local supply chain – to design, engineer, test, manufacture and market vehicles all in one location. In recent years, the Warwickshire and Coventry cluster has become a leading centre of low carbon propulsion and future mobility including electric vehicles, autonomous vehicles, rail, aerospace and last mile delivery. Warwickshire is now a popular location for test-beds for autonomous vehicles such as the “Midlands Future Mobility” project which is trialling connected vehicle technology, infrastructure and services in real-life conditions on roads in Coventry and Warwickshire. The County Council also has its own Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy setting out how it will support the implementation of EV infrastructure in Warwickshire and promote the adoption of electric vehicles. Future mobility is identified as a key economic growth opportunity for the UK in the Government's National Industrial Strategy, and also within the West Midlands Industrial Strategy.



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Warwickshire is home to world-class and leading R&D and technology sites across a number of sectors including the largest concentration of automotive technology activity in the UK.

R&D and Technology Sites in Warwickshire





Warwickshire is also home to one of the UK's strongest clusters of video games companies. "Silicon Spa" – the area in and around Leamington Spa – has over 80 studios and 8,000 people employed in 'computer programming, consultancy and related activities', and many more in the wider, thriving digital creative sector. This sector has huge future growth potential, with new immersive technologies such as virtual, augmented and mixed reality changing how we experience the world around us – from entertainment to art, to shopping and classrooms. "Creative content, technologies and techniques" has been identified as a key opportunity for economic growth within the West Midlands Industrial Strategy, which has a large focus on Warwickshire's unique assets. Warwickshire is also well placed to benefit from the growth of this artificial intelligence and data-driven economy – another of the four Grand Challenges in the Government's Industrial Strategy, and businesses could seek to exploit opportunities arising from "Industry 4.0" (also known as the "Fourth Industrial Revolution") – the trend towards automation and data exchange in manufacturing technologies and processes.

Warwickshire has long been a focus for the UK tourism industry given our unique history through William Shakespeare, assets such as Warwick Castle and newer attractions such as the Rugby Hall of Fame. There were nearly 16,806,000 visits to Warwickshire in 2018 – up by 6% since 2009 – and

the average spend per visit has increased by 82% over the same period. Tourism is now worth over £1 billion to the local economy and it employs over 20,000 people – approximately 6% of all employment in Warwickshire. Indeed, the automotive technology, advanced manufacturing, digital creative, video game development and tourism sectors account for 20% of all employment in Warwickshire and they have seen 25% growth since 2009 – faster than that of total employment.

In addition, while a relatively small direct contributor to the economy in absolute terms, the farming and agricultural sector plays a huge role in making Warwickshire the rural, green and attractive location that underpins and supports our wider economic base, and particularly our tourism offer. Moreover, the sector will face new challenges and opportunities following Brexit, and growth potential through the development and utilisation of innovative new technologies. Local, artisan food & drink is also growing in popularity, and will play a key role in reducing food miles and our collective desire to reduce the carbon footprint of Warwickshire's economy. The farming, food and drink sector is therefore another priority sector for Warwickshire that we will proactively look to help and support going forward.



In order to maximise the county's economic strengths, the County Council will deliver the following high-level actions. We will:

- **Investor development** – Proactively engage and work with businesses in these key sectors, both directly and via providers such as CW Growth Hub, to develop Sector Growth Plans to help ensure that businesses have access to the land, premises, infrastructure, skills and wider support that they need to locate or grow in Warwickshire.
- Work with partners to design, commission and support the delivery of **innovation advice and support**, linking businesses with the strong local knowledge and research base around these key sectors to facilitate and accelerate the development of new products and services.
- Work with partners to design, commission and help deliver **business support programmes** that meet the needs of our priority sectors.
- Explore the potential of creating a dedicated “zone” to encourage and support the **development and roll-out of EV technology**.
- **Attract and secure new inward investment** – Maximise Warwickshire's success in attracting FDI (foreign direct investment) and build on our position as the leading Midlands location for investment from foreign-owned companies. We will work with partners to promote our unique sector strengths and consolidate our position as the home of the UK automotive technology sector and the go to location outside London for games development studios.
- Use our knowledge of these sectors and demand for commercial space to **provide evidence to promote strategic land supply** for planning authorities.
- Use our knowledge of these sectors to help identify current and future **skills requirements** to shape and inform local training provision, and promote opportunities for employment for residents, including students, parents and careers advisors.



Our Key Priorities For The Warwickshire Economy

2

A green and sustainable economy – helping enable and support our businesses to transition to the low carbon economy.

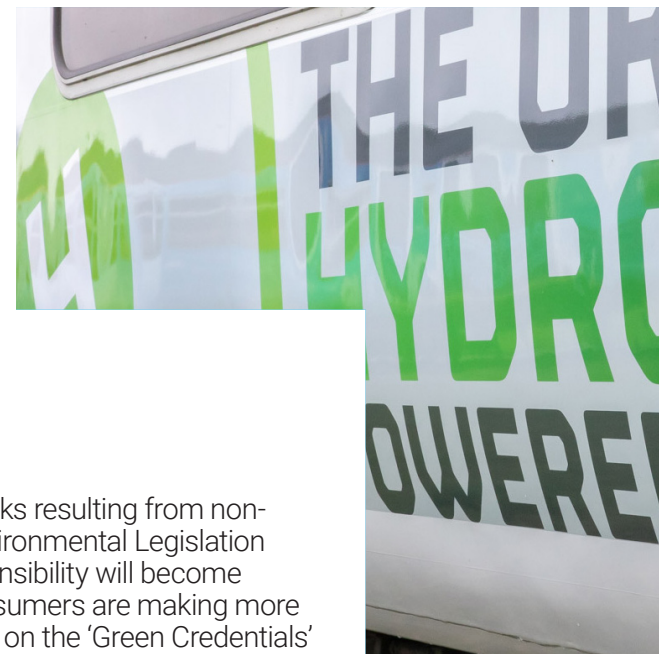
Our towns and villages are already evolving in reaction to digital, planning and global changes. The environmental agenda is likely to further accelerate this evolution and we will continue to work across our communities to support and assist this change.

The County Council has reduced its direct carbon emissions by 53% over five years by delivering environmental and financial savings and the authority declared a climate change emergency in June 2019. A plan to drive further improvement is being developed and some actions are already underway such as a switch to flexible working and the adoption of new technology in order to reduce our environmental impact whilst increasing our social and economic impact through improved productivity and efficiency. Through its own words and actions the Council will share its knowledge and act as a beacon for other organisations in Warwickshire.

As the predicted effects of Climate Change become a reality (i.e. much hotter or wetter conditions) organisations need to adapt their working practices and reduce energy and water consumption. They will need to look for ways to 'green' their supply chains and review distribution and transport arrangements. The

financial and reputational risks resulting from non-compliance means that Environmental Legislation and Corporate Social Responsibility will become increasingly important. Consumers are making more purchasing decisions based on the 'Green Credentials' of a company and sustainable products and services are in demand.

There are many business opportunities which could arise from embracing environmental sustainability. The County Council will aim to identify and highlight some of these benefits – particularly those which meet the recommendations of the proposed DEFRA National Resource & Waste Strategy which requires businesses to have actions in place by 2023. Suggested measures from this report include recycling from businesses (incorporating food waste), extended producer responsibility and the deposit return scheme. We will seek to build on the positives in order to create economically viable ways of doing business in the most 'sustainable and environmentally positive' way possible for Warwickshire.



In order to help businesses transition to a low carbon economy and realise some of the economic benefits of this change the County Council will deliver the following high-level actions. We will:

- Work with partners to develop, commission and support the delivery of **business support programmes that help companies reduce energy use and waste**, and help transition to a low carbon economic model. We will explore new funding opportunities that may arise from the Government's new Shared Prosperity Fund to further advance this agenda.
- Through our new **Local Transport Plan and associated Area Strategies**, we will continue to seek to encourage greater modal shift towards more sustainable transport options and invest in new infrastructure such as new segregated cycle routes.
- Continue to implement our **Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy**, helping create a comprehensive network of EV charge points across the county to encourage and accelerate uptake of electric vehicles. Work with our strong local business sector in automotive technology to explore further actions Warwickshire County Council can take to ensure the county is leading the way in the uptake of electric vehicles.
- Work with key partners and stakeholders to **support the wider growth and development of new technology**, particularly in areas such as battery technology, connected and autonomous vehicles, very light rail, and renewable energy.
- Work with business to help implement the forthcoming **National Resource and Waste Strategy**, and likely extended producer responsibilities and deposit return schemes.



Our Key Priorities For The Warwickshire Economy

3

Supporting business growth – proactively helping businesses start, grow and scale and providing the right environment and support to enable this to happen consistently.

Warwickshire has good start-up rates – 58.8 business births per 10,000 population in 2018 compared to 53 for the West Midlands region. However, there are significant variations across the county with Rugby, Warwick and Stratford being significantly above the average (63.9, 63.8 and 61.5 business births per 10,000 population respectively) whilst Nuneaton & Bedworth and North Warwickshire are both below it (51.2 and 47.8). There are also certain groups who are underrepresented relative to their share of the overall population. For example, only 17% of businesses nationally are majority female-led and only 5% are minority ethnic group-led (whilst minority ethnic groups make up 14% of the population). There is a wealth of evidence to show that entrepreneurs and small businesses that access business start-up support at an early stage are more likely to survive, grow and prosper than those who do not. A recent review of business support in Coventry and Warwickshire highlighted the market failure in the provision of start-up support and identified the continued need for public sector investment in start-up programmes locally.



While we perform relatively well in terms of new start-ups, the number of businesses scaling up and achieving £1 million plus turnover after three years is below the national average. Our average business size is also smaller than the UK average – which together with a trend of businesses being less “growth inclined” and those which face barriers to growth – could limit the future growth of the Warwickshire economy. A small number of key issues are identified as holding back business growth:

- Access to finance – both the availability of the right type of finance at the different stages of business growth and the business skills to access it;
- Access to land & property (the recent Coventry and Warwickshire Employment Market Signals Study identified an acute shortage of premises, particularly for start-ups and small businesses);
- Access to suitably skilled labour;
- Access to knowledge and innovation support.

In order to support business growth in Warwickshire, the County Council will deliver the following high-level actions. We will:

- Continue to support the **Coventry & Warwickshire Growth Hub** as the “one-stop shop” for information, diagnostic and brokerage to business support programmes in the area
- **Start-Up Support** – Increase the number of sustainable new businesses by utilising external funding to commission a business start-up service across Warwickshire, and other specialist start-up support programmes.
- **Business Support** – Increase the growth capacity of established businesses by working with partners to commission and (where appropriate) deliver business support programmes which address specific barriers to growth (e.g. access to finance, creative sector, digital, retail, rural, social enterprise, tourism).
- **Scale-Up Support** – Increase the scale-up capacity of tech-based and other innovation-led micro and small businesses by working with University of Warwick Science Park to deliver the “Business Ready” programme.
- **Access to Finance** – Increase the number of businesses able to access the finance they need to grow by continuing to invest in our programme of business loans and capital grants and identifying new opportunities in support of the County Council's Commercial Strategy.
- **Business Space** – Increase the number of start-up and small businesses able to find the accommodation they need to start, grow and scale by maximising the use of our existing Business Centre portfolio, opening a new business centre in Nuneaton town centre, and identifying opportunities for additional centres or light industrial space in support of the County Council's Commercial Strategy.
- **Employment & Skills Support** – work with businesses to help identify skill requirements, support training and recruitment activity, promote the utilisation of apprenticeships (and continue to invest in the WCC Apprenticeship Levy Share Programme), and work with training providers and partners to shape education and training provision to better meet the local needs of businesses
- **Future Business Support** – work with businesses and partners to identify specific local barriers to growth and design, commission and support delivery of new provision as required. Work with partners to shape the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund and other Government programmes in order to secure funding to support future business support programmes.



Our Key Priorities For The Warwickshire Economy

4

A well and appropriately skilled population – skills activity closely aligned with the needs of businesses, now and into the future; working to build a strong pipeline of diverse talent to support our future economic growth.

Two thirds of businesses in Warwickshire are reported to have skills shortages in their workforce, which is holding back their growth potential. At the same time changing technology, the rise of automation and a shift to higher level skills mean significant changes are needed to the local skills base. Warwickshire could be particularly impacted by automation with 46.9% of jobs in the County identified as being in occupations which have a medium to high risk of automation by 2030, compared to 41.9% nationally. Whilst our local education and training provision acknowledges these changes, due to the speed of change and complexity of some skills needs, it is difficult for providers to maintain an offer which is current and meets future demand. Businesses also report that the current offer of apprenticeships, multiple training programmes and funding streams is difficult to understand and access.

Rapidly changing technology and working practices highlight the importance of continual skills development within the workforce and residents of Warwickshire. In particular, there is a need to support businesses and communities to develop the digital skills and tools they need in an increasingly digital



economy. However, recent surveys from the Learning and Work Institute suggest that, nationally, the proportion of adults engaged in some form of learning has been decreasing in recent years and the latest data (2019) found the lowest number engaged since they started the survey some twenty years ago. It is therefore vital that we continue to promote, encourage and support our businesses to invest in training, and our workforce and residents to engage in learning and development opportunities.

It is also important that we develop and build a strong pipeline of talent by working proactively with our schools, colleges, local universities and business community to ensure that our local education provision and careers support is well aligned with, and supportive of, our particular local growth opportunities (particularly, but not exclusively, within our key strengths and priority sectors). Greater integration between learning opportunities and local business needs, both within the education sector and beyond into adult learning, is at the heart of our recent Warwickshire Careers Strategy.

In order to promote a well and appropriately skilled population, the County Council will work with partners to deliver our new Careers Strategy and will focus on the following high-level actions. We will:

- **Awareness of Opportunities** – Increase awareness of the range of career and employment opportunities locally by developing a new localised careers information service and providing more detailed local labour market information. Work with local employers to increase the amount of work tasters/ work experience available for young people and delivering campaigns which showcase career opportunities.
- **Alignment of Demand and Supply** – Improve the alignment of demand and supply of skills by working with education and training providers to influence and help shape skills provision in Warwickshire in recognition of local needs including our priority sectors.
- **Business Skills Support** – Increase the growth capacity of established businesses by providing impartial advice and brokerage on skills, apprenticeships and recruitment, and continue to invest in the County Council's Apprenticeship Levy share programme.
- **Wider Talent Pool** – Tackle skills shortages by encouraging and enabling businesses to recruit from a richer and wider talent pool and undertaking training and development of their own employees.
- **Graduate retention** – Retain talent and improve graduation retention rates by working with local universities and businesses to deliver campaigns.
- **Adult Community Learning** – continue to invest in adult community learning and engage with those residents least likely to participate in learning and enable them to access high quality learning opportunities that are aligned with local economic needs and opportunities.
- **Future Skills Provision** – Ensure that future skills provision recognises Warwickshire's local needs by working with partners to shape the new UK Shared Prosperity Fund and other Government programmes and designing and commissioning new provision as required.



Our Key Priorities For The Warwickshire Economy

5

Inclusive Growth – ensuring that all residents – particularly our more vulnerable – have the support and opportunity to benefit from economic growth in the county.

Whilst Warwickshire has seen good levels of economic growth in recent years, it is recognised that the benefits of this growth are not always shared equally across society. Changing technology, employment patterns and working practices can create new opportunities for people to undertake work that fits better with their circumstances, but it can also create more insecure and lower paid work for others. In common with the national picture, but somewhat more marked in Warwickshire, we have seen the higher earners in society experience faster rates of growth in their wages while lower earners have seen limited increases in real wages (i.e. income adjusted for inflation) since the end of the recession.

Furthermore, certain groups of society are more likely to miss out on the benefits of economic growth and the employment opportunities being created. As set out in our recent Director of Public Health Report, “Working for Wellbeing in Warwickshire”, evidence shows that work is inherently a good thing, and those in employment are, on average, more likely to be happier and healthier, and have less need for public sector support.



Vulnerable learners have on average poorer positive outcomes from education. For example, the proportion of 16 & 17 year old Children Looked After who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) in 2017/ 2018 was just under 20% in Warwickshire compared to an average for all 16 & 17 year olds of just 3.8%. Vulnerable groups also experience much lower employment rates. For example, according to the British Association of Supported Employment, only 5.7% of people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) go into paid employment, despite 78% people with SEND wanting to work. Not only is this a huge waste of potential talent within the workforce, it creates extra costs and demands on the public sector. For example, the National Audit Office has calculated that enabling a young person with a learning disability to develop effective life and employability skills so that they can live semi-independently could reduce lifetime support costs to the public sector of around £1m, as well as helping generate additional tax revenue.



Warwickshire also has an ageing population with 118,000 people – or 20% of the population – now aged 65 or above. This group has grown by 25% since 2009 whereas the total population has only grown by 5%. The over-55s can face particular difficulties in finding employment, and the over 55s are now the largest group on Jobcentre Plus schemes for people looking for work. Finally, there is a need to support our residents of all ages to develop the digital skills and tools they need in an increasingly digital economy.

In order to ensure that all residents have the support and opportunity to benefit from economic growth in the county, the County Council will deliver the following high-level actions. We will:



- **Support those who are unemployed to move into employment** by working with the Department for Work and Pensions, Education Skills Funding Agency and other funders to commission appropriate employment support programmes in Warwickshire and supporting partners with the delivery of employment projects and services.
- **Improve education outcomes** by providing targeted support and help to our most vulnerable learners including people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), Children Looked After and young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).
- Continue to utilise our **Supportive Employers Forum** to engage and work with businesses to provide work experience, supported internships and apprenticeship programmes for our most vulnerable learners, with a particular focus on those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).
- Develop a new strategy and commissioning framework for **employment support for vulnerable adults**.
- **Self-Employment** – Improve enterprise rates in communities with low levels of enterprise and increase the participation of vulnerable groups in enterprise by working with partners to commission specialist start-up support programmes.
- **Commission for 'social value'** – Work to secure economic, social and/ or environmental benefits when buying services to the advantage of disadvantaged groups.

Our Key Priorities For The Warwickshire Economy

6

A network of diverse and vibrant places – celebrating our diversity, supporting growth across all areas, securing the future of our town centres and tackling areas of disadvantage and lower economic performance.

Warwickshire is a diverse County with a strong network of Towns and Villages; each with their own unique footprint of social, economic, cultural and historical features. There are, however, wide variations in levels of economic performance and earnings across the County but it is recognised that, due to the unique character of each place, there is no 'one size fits all' solution.

In Nuneaton and Bedworth, Gross Value Added (GVA) per head of population (a standard measure of relative prosperity) is just one third that of Warwick District, whilst median residential annual earnings in 2019 ranged from £33,649 in Warwick District to £28,061 in Nuneaton & Bedworth. There is a need to ensure we are supporting each location to play to its strengths whilst at the same time identifying opportunities to develop the right environment for sustainable growth. Whilst Warwickshire is one of the least deprived upper tier local authorities in England (121st out of 151) according to the recently published 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation there are huge variations across the county. Nuneaton and Bedworth is the 96th most



deprived district and borough whilst Stratford-on-Avon is the 266th least deprived out of 317 areas. There are also local variations within all five of district and borough areas.

Town centres play a very visible and pivotal role in the identity and sense of place of an area. However, consumer behaviour has markedly changed with the growth of online, digital and out of town shopping, and our town centres are evolving and will have to adapt in response to this. There is a need to embrace the opportunities borne out of this change to reinvent and re-purpose their role, whilst maintaining what is unique and special about our network of centres. We are also committed to supporting our vibrant and diverse rural economy. Nearly a third of our population live in rural areas and just over a third of our businesses are based there. In addition, Warwickshire has an ageing population which means we need to ensure our places are 'fit for purpose' and accessible to all.

In recognition of this we will take a more place-based approach to provide a tailored blend of support for each location, underpinned by the core strategic approach set out in the rest of this strategy.





In order to support growth; tackle disadvantage; improve economic performance and help future proof our network of towns & villages, the County Council will deliver the following high-level actions. We will:

- **Visioning, Development and Planning –** Improve our towns and villages through collaborative working with the private sector and partners to develop and deliver programmes or projects appropriate to each place (e.g. Transforming Nuneaton Programme, Leamington Vision, Bedworth Vision, Henley Street Stratford)
- **Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) & Town Partnerships –** Maximise our outputs with the BIDs (new and proposed) to enhance town centre business communities, attract investment and increase footfall. We will continue to deliver and build the Warwickshire Towns Network as a knowledge sharing and peer support platform for place practitioners across the County, providing a voice and at sub regional, national and international level for Warwickshire Towns and Villages and look to develop and commission tailored support programmes for the retail sector where needed.
- **Funding & Investment –** Work with partners to secure funding (e.g. Future High Streets, Towns Fund, Heritage Action Zones) which will contribute and enhance the attractiveness of place or experience in our towns and villages. We will drive county-wide funding programmes where appropriate, and work with the private sector to explore potential new delivery vehicles for the investment and growth of Warwickshire's assets, linking to our new Commercial Strategy.
- **County-wide Events –** We will look to continue to raise the profile of Warwickshire, and seek to attract and host/partner national sporting and cultural events which will have a lasting and positive socio-economic impact on the area – such as Womens Cycling Tour, Midlands Velo, Commonwealth Games events, Coventry City of Culture 2021 activities, etc. We will also support and organise events which promote particular sectors such as the Warwickshire Food & Drink Festival.
- **Country Parks –** Utilise our Country Parks as hubs for environmental, social and economic activity recognising their role in supporting the health and well-being of their visitors.

Our Key Priorities For The Warwickshire Economy

7

A connected county – ensuring we have the right physical and digital infrastructure to facilitate and enable future economic growth.

Warwickshire is well located on the strategic transport network, making the county very accessible by road, rail and air. Many of the country's major road and rail routes also pass through the county. However, the right infrastructure into the future is vital to Warwickshire's ongoing ability to function with residents and businesses alike relying on good transport connectivity. Good transport infrastructure and services are also key to mitigate, support and unlock housing and employment growth. At the same time, it is important that we invest in transport measures that encourage more sustainable and healthy travel habits. The County Council, as the Highway and Transport Authority, plays a key role not least in ensuring that our transport planning links to, and supports, economic growth and place-shaping. We also have an important role in encouraging greater use of sustainable transport modes thereby helping reduce carbon and improve air quality. For example, the County Council now has its own Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy setting out how we will support the implementation of EV infrastructure in the county and promote the adoption of electric vehicles. The Authority has led by example in this area by investing in its own fleet of hybrid and electric vehicles for employee use.



Digital infrastructure is equally important in today's inter-connected world. The County Council has invested heavily in the roll-out of superfast broadband with funding from Government, the European Union and local authority partners in order to achieve 98% coverage by the end of 2020. However, the focus is now shifting to full fibre, particularly as full fibre enables the 5G network to be built which will bring huge technological and service improvements as well as open up major new market opportunities. Coverage of full fibre nationally currently stands at just 7%. The Future Telecoms Infrastructure Review published by the Government in 2018 sets ambitious targets of 15 million premises connected to full fibre by 2025 with nationwide coverage by 2033. It is vital that Warwickshire continues to invest in the digital infrastructure needed to support future economic growth or we risk losing our competitive advantage to those places which do so.

In order to ensure we have the right physical and digital infrastructure to facilitate and enable future economic growth, the County Council will deliver the following high-level actions. We will:

- **Local Transport Plan and Area Strategies –**

Undertake a comprehensive review of the Local Transport Plan and prepare Area Transport Strategies for each part of the County. These will both identify the transport infrastructure and services necessary to mitigate and support the housing and employment growth proposals contained within Local Plans, and identify and set out a pipeline of transport schemes which address current and future transport issues within Warwickshire, including measures that encourage more sustainable and healthy travel habits, reduce carbon and improve air quality.

Superfast Broadband & Full Fibre

Infrastructure – continue to increase the number of premises able to access superfast (30 Mbps) fibre broadband via the CSW Broadband project, enable delivery of full fibre infrastructure to rural areas via the Government's Rural Gigabit Connectivity (RGC) programme, and deliver full fibre infrastructure to 224 public buildings in Warwickshire as part of the Government's Local Full Fibre Network (LFFN) programme



- **Strategic Road and Rail Network –** Work with Midlands Connect, Highways England, Network Rail and the West Midlands Rail Executive to identify, develop and lobby for investment in the strategic road and rail network to improve connectivity and support the cumulative impacts of growth across the Midlands. Work with Local Highway/Transport Authorities and Sub-National Transport Bodies in adjoining areas to co-ordinate transport infrastructure delivery and ensure where possible that their strategic transport infrastructure proposals support and enhance connectivity for Warwickshire residents and businesses

- **Local Transport Schemes – HS2 and UK Central –** Work with partners to deliver a package of transport improvements to support access to the HS2 interchange and wider UK Central area in order to ensure that Warwickshire residents and businesses are able to take advantage of the economic opportunities arising from these proposals.

- **5G Digital Networks –** Work with partners and industry to maximise opportunities for Warwickshire from the roll-out of 5G digital networks



4.

Our Priorities

Our approach to supporting the growth of the Warwickshire economy – and delivering this Economic Growth Strategy – is based on a small number of guiding principles:

- Our work is to be evidence-based.
- We remain partnership and collaboration focused.
- We will take a sequential approach to economic growth.
- We will where appropriate take a place-based approach which recognises there is no 'one size fits all' solution.
- We will seek to shape and inform what others do, facilitating and supporting where needed.

Warwickshire County Council itself will only undertake delivery when:

- A market failure exists.
- Others will not undertake the delivery.
- There is a strategic or commercial case to do so.

WCC's sequential approach to economic growth.

Influence

Facilitate

Commission

Deliver

The Strategy and associated action plan also support – or influence – the delivery of other County Council or Warwickshire-wide strategies and plans. These strategies and plans include:

- WCC's Capital Strategy 2020-2030 – Investing in Warwickshire
- WCC's Visitor Economy Forward Plan 2018-2022
- Warwickshire Education Strategy 2018-2023
- Warwickshire Careers Strategy 2019/ 2020 – 2024/ 2025
- Warwickshire's Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2018-2020 Refresh)

- Connecting Communities: WCC's Voluntary and Community Sector Strategy 2020-2025
- Warwickshire's Heritage & Culture Strategy 2020-2025
- Warwickshire Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 (currently being reviewed)
- Warwickshire Rail Strategy 2019-2034
- WCC's Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2017-2026
- WCC Digital Infrastructure Strategy
- WCC work on Climate Change Mitigation & Adaptation
- WCC's Commercial Strategy

5.

Monitoring Impact and Success

An action plan will be developed for each priority. This will set out key actions in the short (one year or less), medium (one to three years) and longer term (more than three years).

The following key performance indicators will be used to track progress of the Strategy and monitor impact / success:

Economy and Business

- Total GVA (economic output)
- GVA per head of population (relative prosperity)
- GVA per job filled (productivity)
- Variation in productivity across Warwickshire
- Employment in priority sectors
- Average median wages of employees

Employment and Skills

- Employment Rates
- Unemployment Rate
- % of residents with Level 4+ qualifications
- % of residents with no qualifications
- Number of apprenticeships (under 24 yr olds)
- Average median wages of residents