

Marbury Ward update July & August 2025



Dear Parish Councillors,

As we head into the summer holidays, we just wanted to say a huge thank you for all your ongoing support and collaboration over the past few months. We know how much you do, often behind the scenes, to keep our villages vibrant, resilient and forward-looking. It makes a real difference.

This July-August update covers activity and progress on a number of fronts. From the trial of our Community-Led Highways Maintenance scheme (let's get those signs cleaned and footpaths sorted!), to events across the Ward and wider activity across the Borough. Thanks also for your member budget applications, it is great to get a number approved so early in the financial year.

We also touch on the Local Plan consultation (following the session we organised earlier this month with Rob Charnley, Head of Planning at Cheshire West & Chester), key planning matters like the Winnington Lime Beds Solar Farm appeal, and the ongoing Devolution discussions that could reshape how powers and funding are managed across Cheshire & Warrington.

There's lots happening in and around the ward – events, activities, community groups and open spaces to explore. Please do encourage your residents to get out there and make the most of Marbury. Our communities are at their best when they're connected and active.

We wish you all a relaxing and enjoyable summer break. And as ever, we're only a phone call, WhatsApp or email away if anything crops up.

With thanks and best wishes,

Cllr's Lynn Gibbon, Phil Marshall, Norman Wright
[Marbury Ward, Cheshire West & Chester Council](#)



Priorities in Marbury

Residents Survey 2025

We will be conducting a resident's survey across Marbury before the end of the year to understand both Local and National concerns and help set our priorities within the Ward. This will be available to complete both online and via a delivered survey, so we are hoping to receive a high level of engagement. Once launched, any help from the Parishes to publicise would be much appreciated.

Marbury Ward – Highways Maintenance Trial Community Led Improvements

We, as your ward councillors, requested this pilot scheme to give our communities more influence over small but noticeable highways issues — the kind that often fall through the cracks in borough-wide priorities.

What's the Trial?

A CWaC contractor team (two operatives and a vehicle) will be available to carry out minor maintenance tasks that don't require additional materials like tarmac.

Parish Council Input

All Parish Councils have been sent a form by Lynn to highlight any local highways defects. These must be returned to Highways by the end of July. The issues will then be collated and prioritised to ensure a fair spread of work across the ward.

The types of minor maintenance work included in this initiative would typically involve:

- Clearing encroaching small areas of grass and weeds from footways or paths
- General low-level tree pruning and branch removal to address overhanging vegetation (tree ownership would need to be confirmed)
- Low level hedge trimming and maintenance (would not include private hedges)
- Cleaning road signs, fingerposts, street nameplates and bollards
- Straightening / reaffixing loose signs
- Removing debris off the top of gullies (not cleansing)



Devolution – Cheshire & Warrington

Conversations and planning continues across the Council in readiness for the potential devolution deal for Cheshire East, Cheshire West & Chester and Warrington (Cheshire & Warrington) in 2026.

Proposed Devolution Deal – Our Position

The decision to proceed with the proposed devolution deal will require full support from all three councils. Elected members, there will be a vote in September.

As your Ward Members, we are supportive in principle of devolving more powers locally to enable better decision-making. However, the scope of devolution and the funding to support it still remains unclear.

Our Key Concern: The Timescale

If approved, the new arrangements would come into force in May 2026. We believe this is unnecessarily rushed. Our preference has always been May 2027, which would:

- Allow more time for proper planning, scrutiny, and public engagement
- Align the Mayoral election with the next Cheshire West & Chester local elections, which would be cheaper and would likely improve voter turnout

The timetable is ultimately being driven by the Labour administrations running the three councils involved, along with Central Government. However, it now looks like we may have been listened too. We are awaiting an imminent ministerial update which could move it to 2027 due to short timescales. The link below provides latest devolution information:

[Cheshire and Warrington devolution: have your say | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

Planning - Local Plan - Have Your Say – Future Development in Cheshire West

Cheshire West and Chester Council is consulting on the Issues and Options document — the first formal stage in preparing a new Local Plan for the borough.

Local Plans guide where and how development happens, identifying land for housing, employment, and infrastructure to meet local needs.

This consultation invites views on:

- The vision and objectives for the new Local Plan
- How and where future development should be located
- Three possible spatial options to deliver around 29,000 new homes and 150 hectares of employment land over a 15-year period
- Proposed updates to existing Local Plan policies
- Potential areas for growth around local settlements (maps included)

All feedback will help shape the next stage of the plan in 2026. 🗳️ Have your say at:

www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/localplan

Winnington Lime Bed Solar Farm – (Appeal Update)

Planning Appeal: APP/A0665/W/25/3359308

Application Reference: 23/02766/FUL

We have serious concerns about this application and the impact it would have on residents, due to the high volume of aggregate proposed to be transported through residential areas over an extended period.

We are particularly concerned about the effects on:

- Infrastructure capacity
- Environmental quality
- Quality of life for residents across Marbury Ward and the wider Northwich area

The hearing was held on 1 July 2025, where Marbury Councillors, alongside local residents, Parish and Town Councils, and other stakeholders, made formal representations.

We are now awaiting the Secretary of State's decision on the appeal.

Weaver Square

A preferred [development](#) partner for Weaver Square was agreed at Cabinet on 9th July 2025.

Northwich Market - Update & Design Progress

The project design team has now been instructed to begin the detailed design phase, which is expected to take 10–12 weeks to complete. During this time, tender documents will also be prepared, with the aim of issuing the tender once the design is finalised.

The project team is working towards:

- Selecting a main contractor
- Agreeing the fit-out contract by the end of this year

Regular updates will be posted at: 📌 [Northwich Market | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

Public Engagement Summary 6 May – 9 Jun (strong response)

- Over 1,100 responses received
- Nearly 100 attendees at two drop-in events (22–23 May at Barons CWaC and Town Councillors, Northwich BID, existing market traders and staff
- 10 potential new traders came along to learn more
- Around 94% of respondents supported plans to open a new market at Barons Quay

The full engagement report will be published later this summer alongside the launch of a trader recruitment campaign

Northwich Library

Progress continues on the renovation of Northwich Library:


- Scaffold and propping are now installed on the third gable (west elevation)
- The RIBA Stage 3 design has been completed
- A planning application has been submitted and is now live on the Council's website


To help identify any remaining structural issues and reduce risks during refurbishment, soft strip works will begin week commencing 30 June. Communications will be issued ahead of this work.

Community Engagement

- A well-attended drop-in event was held at Weaver Hall Museum on 14 March, with positive feedback from residents
- The Libraries Team also engaged with hundreds of residents at Now Northwich (3 May), again receiving strong support
- Information panels and a fence wrap will soon be installed around the building to share project details

Looking Ahead

- Full repair and refurbishment works are scheduled for completion by the end of 2026
- Updates and images are regularly posted at:
 [Northwich Library renovation | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

Weaver Hall Museum - Meanwhile, the Library Team continues to grow its audience, with a wide range of events and activities. Check out what's on:  [Library events | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

Moss Farm - See website: [Moss Farm | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

Weaver Vale Housing Trust - Tenancy Enforcement Team Update on Improving Tenancy and Neighbourhood Services

WVHT is making changes to improve how they deliver tenancy and neighbourhood services — creating a more joined-up, accountable, and responsive approach that delivers a consistently positive experience for our customers and communities.

As part of this, CW&C is restructuring tenancy enforcement into two dedicated teams:

- Neighbourhood Housing Team
- Safer Neighbourhoods Tea

These changes support our wider commitment to:

- Improve neighbourhood satisfaction
- Build trust with customers and partners

- Support more sustainable tenancies and communities
- Enhance customer experience and tenancy stability
- Strengthen collaboration with stakeholders to develop localised neighbourhood plans
- Promote accountability and visibility through a culture of professional curiosity
- Drive continuous improvement through regular staff and customer feedback

This reflects CWaC's ongoing commitment to improving outcomes and services for all our communities.

Resident Assistance Point – Northwich

New signage has been installed on the front of Northwich Brio Memorial Hall to promote the Resident Assistance Point and its opening times.

We continue to review customer and staff feedback on the new location and are working on improvements to enhance privacy for customers accessing support.

For up-to-date information please use the link: [Northwich regeneration | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

Local Policing

Residents Voice - Please pass on to residents / or relevant group to help shape future policing, based on what the public wants/needs

[Resident's voice | Cheshire Constabulary](#)

Highways

The long-awaited improvement works to highways continues on A559 & A49, with additional replacements of signage and Chevrons

Statutory undertaker works (i.e. gas, electric, B.T. and water) on the highway network are all on [Causeway one.network](#)

For all local information please use this link

[Live roadworks | Cheshire West and Chester](#)

[Council Highways | Cheshire West and Chester](#)

[Council](#)

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/residents/transport-and-roads/highways/live-roadworks>



Swing Bridge Sutton Weaver

The Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge, which carries the busy A56 over the River Weaver Navigation near Junction 12 of the M56, opened in 1926 and will celebrate its centenary next year.

To ensure the structure remains safe and fit for purpose, essential works are needed to repair and replace mechanical and electrical components of the 100-year-old bridge.

Following concerns raised by the local community last year about the potential impact of a full closure, the original programme was paused for review. Since then, Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) has been working closely with the Canal & River Trust to explore ways to reduce disruption. As a result, a revised programme of works has now been agreed.

When is this happening?

16 June 2025 until October 2025 - Bridge Works will take place away from the highway, with no disruption to traffic or pedestrians.

27 October 2025 for 2 weeks (Mon-Thurs 7pm – 6.30am)

Bridge barrier works will require a lane closure and temporary traffic lights to undertake them safely. To help reduce disruption, works have been programmed overnight between the hours of 7pm and 6.30am.

15 to 22 February 2026 - Bridge work completion and testing will require a full road closure so works have been programmed during schools holidays in February 2026, to reduce disruption.

The Canal & River Trust will provide updated information through the different stages of this project. on their website: www.canalrivertrust.org.uk

Local Transport Plan

Have Your Say – The Future of Transport in Cheshire West and Chester

Cheshire West and Chester Council is developing a new Local Transport Plan (LTP) – a statutory borough-wide strategy that sets out the vision, priorities, and delivery programme for how people and goods move around the borough.

The new LTP Core Strategy covers all types of travel – bus, train, bike, car, walking, wheeling, and freight – and aims to improve the transport network for everyone.

Last year, over 1,000 residents shared their views on the key challenges and draft objectives. These insights helped shape the draft plan, and now the Council is seeking further feedback to finalise it.

- Public engagement runs from 20 June to 17 August 2025

- Visit: www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/LTP4

What is the Vision?

By 2040, the borough aims to deliver a transport system that is:

- Sustainable, affordable, adaptable, and accessible
- Supports greener communities, better quality of life, thriving businesses, inclusive prosperity
- Works for both urban and rural areas

The Seven Core Policies

1. Putting the vision at the heart of decisions
2. Rethinking how – and when – we get around
3. Real choices in how we travel
4. Let's join things up
5. Making the most of our existing streets
6. Local issues, local voices
7. Protecting our people and our planet

How to Get Involved

- Public drop-in events and online webinars are being held throughout the engagement period
- Ask questions, share feedback, and help shape the final plan

Online event:

8 August 2025, 12pm–1pm

Register here: www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/LTP4

Festive Lighting – Christmas 2025 Update

Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWaC) recognises the community spirit and vibrancy that festive lighting brings to our towns and villages each Christmas. These displays enhance the appeal of our public spaces — but they must be installed safely, legally, and sustainably.

As the Local Highway Authority, CWaC has a statutory duty to ensure the safety of all highway users. In recent years, incidents such as a fire caused by faulty wiring and decorations dislodged by high vehicles have highlighted the need for tighter controls.

Key Safety & Legal Requirement

To ensure safety and legal compliance, festive lighting installations must adhere to the following:

- CDM Regulations: The organiser is legally responsible for ensuring only competent professionals are used
- Electrical Safety: All temporary electrical installations must meet the same standards as permanent ones and be carried out by qualified professionals
- Highway Safety: Compliance with Chapter 8 of the Traffic Signs Manual and Safety at Street Works and Road Works code of practice is required. A permit may also be needed
- Licensing: A licence (under Section 178, Highways Act 1980) is required for any apparatus over the highway, along with full indemnity of the authority

Full Cost Recovery Introduced

Due to the removal of the corporate Christmas Lighting budget in 2024, Highways can no longer cover festive lighting costs from its core staffing budget. From 2025, CWaC will be moving to full cost recovery for all festive lighting services.

This includes all associated costs:

- Planning
- Safety inspections
- Traffic management
- Installation and removal

These costs must now be met by event organisers or community groups.

One-Off Flat Rate Offer £495 - Christmas 2025

To support Town and Parish Councils and local groups this year, CWaC is offering a one-off simplified pricing structure: Flat Fee: £495

- Applies regardless of the number of lighting columns or building brackets


- When applying online, please select “0–20” units to ensure you’re charged the correct flat rate £495

- CWaC will continue to explore alternative funding sources and offer guidance wherever possible. However, until new funding becomes available, organisers will need to budget for this charge.

For more details or to apply, visit the [Festive Lighting section on the Council website](#).

Public Consultations:

1. Local Plan 2025 – Issues & Options

 **Closes:** 29 August 2025

 **Contribute via:** [Online portal:](#)

Summary: CWaC is seeking views on its future development strategy - where new homes, jobs, infrastructure, transport, and green space should be placed over the next 15 years. Options range from protecting the Green Belt to focusing on transport corridors.

Why get involved:

- Influence land use decisions that affect housing, traffic, and community facilities
 - Help protect valued landscapes and environmental assets
 - Voice local concerns about growth, infrastructure strain, and sustainability
-

2. Local Transport Plan 4 Core Strategy

 **Closes:** (17th August 2025)

 **Contribute via:** [“Future of Transport” on the Council’s “Participate Now” portal](#)

Summary: Views are sought on transport strategy covering public transport, active travel, highways, and carbon reduction.

Why get involved:

- Shape improvements to buses, cycling, walking, and traffic management
 - Support efforts towards net-zero and healthier local travel
 - Ensure transport plans reflect Marbury and local ward priorities
-

3. Licensing Principles for Gambling

 **Closes:** (4th August 2025)

 **Contribute via:** [Council’s Participate Now portal](#)

Summary: Feedback is requested on the council’s gambling licensing framework - covering venues and principles.

Why get involved:

- Safeguard communities from gambling-related harms
 - Influence where and how betting shops and similar venues operate
-

4. Planning Policy Consultations

 **Ongoing** – varies by topic


 **Contribute via:** [Planning pages under “Planning policy consultations”](#)

Summary: This includes topic-specific consultations-site allocations, greenbelt reviews, minerals, waste, and neighbourhood planning.

Why get involved:

- Engage in shaping policies and specific planning applications in your area
- Support robust neighbourhood plans and resource management

5. Future Local Nature Recovery Strategy (Cheshire & Warrington)

 **First stage closes:** 30 September (land registration)


 **Contribute via:** [“Working together for a wilder Cheshire and Warrington” page](#)

Summary: The borough is mapping land and actions to support wildlife, climate adaptation, biodiversity and ecological investment.

Why get involved:

- Influence future green infrastructure and biodiversity priorities
 - Opportunity for landowners/farmers to register eligible land for funding
 - Encourage nature-based projects and community environmental benefits
-

6. September 2026–27 School Admission Arrangements

 **Closes:** (see portal)

 **Contribute via:** [“School admission arrangements” link on consultation page](#)

Summary: Sets proposed criteria for school admissions, appeals, and catchment areas for academic year 2026–27.

Why get involved:

- Ensure fair admissions policies for children in Marbury and nearby areas
- Advocate for clarity and consistency in catchment boundaries

Events

Northwich event web link

[Visit Northwich - A Destination With A Difference](#)

Northwich Festival of Arts

- **When:** Throughout July 2025
 - **Where:** Various venues across Northwich
 - **What:** Month-long celebration of the arts - exhibitions, performances, workshops
 - **More Info:** [Link](#)
-

Northwich River Festival

- **When:** Saturday, 19 July 2025
 - **Where:** Weaver Way, Northwich town centre
 - **What:** Dragon boat and duck races, family activities
 - **More Info:** [Link](#)
-

Victorian Fair – Anderton Boat Lift 150th Anniversary

- **When:** 26-27 July 2025
 - **Where:** Anderton Boat Lift & Visitor Centre
 - **What:** Music, food stalls, family entertainment
 - **More Info:** [Link](#)
-

Friends of Anderton & Marbury: Park Events

- **When:** Various dates through summer 2025
 - **Where:** Marbury Country Park & Anderton Nature Park
 - **What:** Guided walks, conservation and family-friendly activities
 - **More Info:** [FoAM Events Programme](#)
-

Giant Games – Summer Reading Challenge

- **When:** 16 August 2025, 10:30 am–12:30 pm
 - **Where:** Northwich Library (at Weaver Hall Museum)
 - **What:** Drop-in giant board games (Connect 4, Noughts & Crosses)
 - **More Info:** [Cheshire West & Chester Libraries](#)
-

Northwich Pina Colada Festival

- **When:** 16 August 2025
- **Where:** Northwich town centre
- **What:** Music, street performances & Local Food/Beverage (incl Cocktails!)
- **More Info:** [Link](#)

Members Budgets 2025-2026 / Space Hive

The **Member Budget Award Scheme** for 2025/26 allocates £5k to all Councillors to support local projects and initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life and wellbeing of their communities. Funding is provided to recipients as a discretionary award and is aimed at addressing local priorities for action. (With 3 Ward Councillors in Marbury we have a combined budget of £15k)

Member Budgets Applications are now open – budget allocations are generally agreed on a ‘first come first served basis’...

[*To Note: support for local events can be requested through Member Budgets.](#)

<https://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your-council/councillors-and-committees/councillors-allowances/member-budgets>

Cheshire West Crowd (Funding)

The **Cheshire West Crowd** is the Councils partnership with Spacehive to deliver civic crowdfunding. The approach allows communities to play their part through gaining funding to deliver projects that are aligned to the Council's Borough plan.

[Cheshire West Crowd - Home](#)

We have four projects being considered in Northwich/ Winsford area for the July round:

<u>Weaverham - Inclusive Eco-Friendly Play</u>
<u>Save 1st Norley Scout Group.</u>
<u>The Nest Northwest @The Hive</u>
<u>Age-friendly Cheshire West Coordinator</u> (borough wide project)

Other Funding Opportunities:

Funding Opportunities: [Funding opportunities | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

- Co-op Local Community Fund (New) [Co-op](#)
Applications for the next round of funding will **open in June 2025**.
- Energy Efficiency Funding [Energy Efficiency Sharematch | Crowdfunder.co.uk](#)
- Network Rail Community Tree Planting [Network Rail Community Tree Planting Fund - The Tree Council](#) **Closing 31ST JULY 2025**
- [The Stobart Sustainability Fund | Stobart \(eddiestobart.com\)](#)
- Grants for Charities or CIO's - [What We Fund - Bernard Sunley Foundation](#)
- [Grants for historic church interiors and churchyard structures | The Church of England](#)
- [Small Grants | Trusthouse Charitable Foundation](#)
- [Cheshire West and Chester Community Chest 2025 is open! – Cheshire Community Action](#)

Following Cheshire West and Chester Council's announcement on the commencement of the 2025 Community Chest small grants scheme (up to £500), Cheshire Community Action is now inviting applications from local community groups and organisations.

- Climate Action Fund: Our Shared Future (tnlcommunityfund.org.uk)
- Aviva Community Fund [Aviva Community Fund](#)
- Veolia [Funding \(veoliatrust.org\)](#)
- Biffa Funding [Home Page - Biffa Award](#)
- Blue Spark Foundation – grants for projects supporting children and young people [Home - Blue Spark Foundation](#)

Energy Resilience Fund – Power to Change

The Energy Resilience Fund is an initiative assisting community businesses in retrofitting their buildings with energy-saving measures. [Energy Resilience Fund - Power to Change](#)

Electricals Recycling Fund – Material Focus

The Electricals Recycling Fund aims to grow existing methods or test new creative and practical ones for recycling small household electricals. If you

have a project

that would make it easier for the public to repair, reuse or recycle their electricals, you can apply for funding. [Electricals Recycling Fund - Material Focus](#)

Village Halls Main Grants

Grants are available up to £75,000 to support larger improvement projects to rural community buildings in England such as full refits and extensions (this will cover some of the rural areas in the Northwich/Winsford area). [Main grants scheme for village halls - ACRE](#)

London Hearts – defibrillator funding <https://londonhearts.org/defib-scheme/>

[VCSE Energy Efficiency Scheme - Groundwork](#)

Communities Team Web Page: [Communities in action | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

If you could direct any enquiries to NorthwichWinsfordLocality@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk it will help us allocate the appropriate resource.

[Cheshire West and Chester Community Chest 2025 is open! – Cheshire Community Action](#)

Following Cheshire West and Chester Council's announcement on the commencement of the 2025 Community Chest small grants scheme (up to £500), Cheshire Community Action is now inviting applications from local community groups and organisations.

About the Initiative

The 2025 Community Chest small grants scheme, managed by Cheshire Community Action, aims to support local projects that promote well-being, improve physical health, and support carers across Cheshire West and Chester. Designed for smaller organisations and activities, the scheme offers a simple application process with a quick turnaround. Applicants are encouraged to review the funding criteria carefully to ensure eligibility..

How to Apply

Please refer to the [notes on the grant criteria](#) in the first instance. If your group or organisation meets the criteria and you're interested in applying for a small grant from the Community Chest, please email enquiries@cheshireaction.org.uk for an application form or call 01244 40022 and speak to Adele Rylance.

Note: no application deadline, but scheme closes once all funds have been allocated.

Appendices:

- 1. Extracts from: CW Devolution info pack for Members - June 2025**
- 2. Cheshire and Warrington devolution - 24 Questions**

Information pack – June 2025

Cheshire and Warrington devolution

In this pack



You will find:

- An introduction to devolution and what Cheshire and Warrington seeks to achieve from it
- Key messaging to explain our latest position
- Assets that you can share about Cheshire and Warrington seeking a devolution agreement

Introduction



In February, Cheshire and Warrington was confirmed as an area selected to be part of the government's **devolution priority programme (DPP)**, which was a landmark moment for our area.

Since then, the government has undertaken its own consultation across all DPP areas, which closed on 13 April, and we are awaiting the outcome.

What is devolution?

"In England, devolution is the transfer of powers and funding from national to local government. It is important because it ensures that decisions are made closer to the local people, communities and businesses they affect."

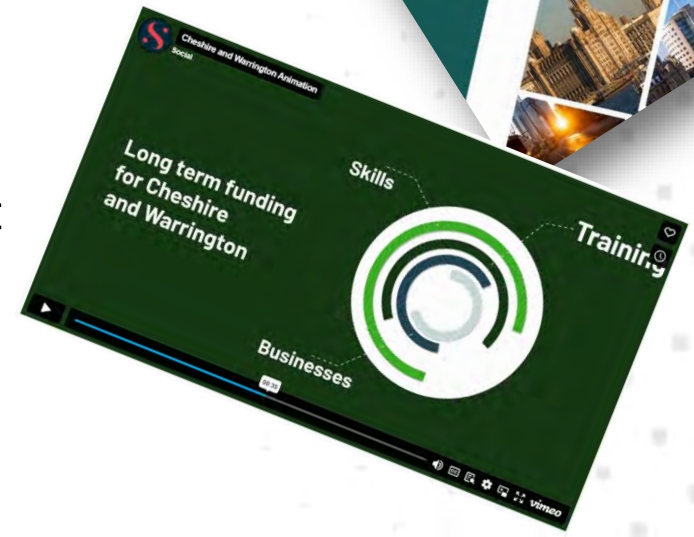


Local Government Association

Devolution is therefore broadly about getting more powers from central government, to enable us to be in control of more decision making locally and regionally. It's all set out in the government's White Paper.

We have developed a short animation which helps to explain what devolution is and how it could benefit Cheshire and Warrington

www.cheshireandwarringtondevolution.com/devolution



Why devolution?

- Government has made it very clear through its White Paper that to get the best funding and transfer of power arrangements, devolution really is the only show in town
- Helpfully, Cheshire and Warrington is already a coherent, economic area
- Government **expects** areas to come together to pursue devolution agreements
- Equally, the devolution Minister, Jim McMahon MP, has previously suggested that devolved regions that have elected Mayors, will get the best opportunities



“[Combined authorities with mayors are] the only way to achieve power shift away from Westminster and Whitehall. They are part of our system going forward”

Jim McMahon

Key info



- Devolution for Cheshire and Warrington could mean more decisions made locally, by the people who know our area best – not dictated from Westminster
- It means local leaders will make key decisions about our area that matter most our residents, communities and businesses
- We need affordable and convenient transport, good-quality homes in the right places, and a workforce with the skills our businesses need. Devolution could help us to meet these challenges

Key info



- Cheshire and Warrington's shared vision is to be the healthiest, most sustainable, inclusive and growing economy in the UK
- For residents, devolution could mean better transport, more jobs, stronger skills training, thriving town centres and prosperous rural communities – creating a place where everyone benefits
- For businesses, it could enable growth and investment in our world-leading sectors – life sciences, clean energy, digital, and advanced manufacturing

Key info



Will there be an elected mayor?

- Our preference is to secure a devolution agreement with an elected Mayor, by May 2026
- Government has said that the powers and funding that can best support Cheshire and Warrington would come with a Mayor
- Having a Mayor would mean we could potentially get powers closer to that of the Liverpool City Region and Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- An elected Mayor could also provide clearer lines of accountability and transparency for the public to engage with policy decisions made in their area

Key info



Would a devolution agreement effectively mean a merger of the three councils?

- The three councils working on striking a devolution agreement are Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Warrington
- Devolution is **not** about councils inheriting any budgets, assets or debts of other councils – councils will retain their current responsibilities
- Devolution is also not a given! Any devolution agreement would be subject to approval from the three councils, before its implemented

Find out more at cheshireandwarringtondevolution.com

FAQs



A series of Frequently Asked Questions have been uploaded to the Cheshire and Warrington Devolution website

These include questions such as:

What is the timetable?

How much will this cost?

What will this mean for local transport?

Find out more at cheshireandwarringtondevolution.com/devolution

A set of 24 FAQs, specifically for Elected Members, has also been developed for Councillors



Cheshire +
Warrington

Cheshire and Warrington Devolution – 24 Questions



Devolution – national picture



- Devolution has been around for over 10 years – it is now an established architecture across England, with deals covering 60% of the English population
- Deals providing powers to local leaders now cover nearly 34 million people in England – including nine of our 10 largest cities and 90% of the North
- The current government wants to continue with devolution, but faster – hence the Devolution Priority Programme (DPP)
- English Devolution White Paper was published in December 2024 – sets out the plan for devolution going forward
- Devolution is the default setting – ambition for the whole of England to be devolved
- If we don't work together to get the best deal now, it will be done to us further down the line
- The White Paper clearly states that the best deals come with a Mayor – Mayoral Combined Authorities are given greater powers/funding than those without an elected Mayor

Devolution Priority Programme (DPP)



- A fast-track programme to securing a devolution agreement
- Confirmed in February 2025 – Cheshire and Warrington + five other areas:
 - Cumbria
 - Greater Essex
 - Hampshire and Solent
 - Norfolk and Suffolk
 - Sussex and Brighton
- Includes support and capacity funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), and the network of other areas on the programme
- Mayoral elections to be held in May 2026 (subject to council and government decisions)

Government consultation



- Government carried out a statutory consultation across all DPP areas – 17 February to 13 April
- Consultation sought views, particularly from interested parties, including those who live and work across Cheshire and Warrington, on the effect of establishing a Mayoral Combined Authority in the area
- **We are awaiting the outcome of the consultation**



24 Questions

1) Is it another layer of bureaucracy?

- **No** – devolution shifts powers and funding from government to Cheshire and Warrington
- Powers over transport, skills, housing and growth move to local control
- Major decisions about Cheshire and Warrington will be made in the area by local leaders, closer to the people they affect
- The three councils will remain focused on their local services

2) It's happening too fast – why 2026?

- The Devolution Priority Programme (DPP) does mean we need to work at pace, which is the government's requirement
- Cheshire and Warrington has been working together towards devolution in a number of ways for the last 10 years
- We have an opportunity right now to secure additional funding and powers for Cheshire and Warrington, and we cannot miss this opportunity
- Not taking advantage of the DPP would push us to the back of the queue
- By acting now, we can negotiate a better deal – if we delay, and we run the risk of securing far less funding

3) What is the cost of setting up a Combined Authority?



- Individual councils will **not** have to fund this – it will **not** be a cost on council budgets
- Council contribution is in officer time to support the programme
- Set up costs will be funded by **(subject to Joint Committee agreement on 30 May 2025):**
 - Central government – £1million
 - Previously agreed surplus from Enterprise Zone (Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington) – £250k
 - LGA Grant – £25k
 - **Total estimated cost – £1.275million**

4) How much will the Mayoral election cost?

- Estimated cost is £2.5million
- This cost is expected to be funded by the first year of funding received by the new Combined Authority, this will be confirmed by the shadow Combined Authority once set-up
- The three councils are not expected to have to cashflow the cost of the election, as resources will be used from Enterprise Cheshire and Warrington and MHCLG capacity funding if needed.

5) What is the cost of running/operating the Combined Authority?

- The new Combined Authority will be funded by a combination of new government funding and pre-existing local funding
- We will not know the size, shape or responsibilities of the Combined Authority until after the government's comprehensive spending review in June

6) How much will the Mayor be paid?



- The salary of the Mayor will be in comparison to other Mayoral Combined Authorities
- It is for the shadow Combined Authority, with its own governing body, to determine the salary
- Benchmarking (2022/23):
 - **GMCA** – £114,000
 - **LCR** – £96,000
 - **West Yorkshire** – £105,000
 - **South Yorkshire** – £79,000

7) Why do we need an elected Mayor?

- Areas with an elected mayor get the greatest powers and funding
- A Mayor will provide a stronger voice for Cheshire and Warrington with a direct line into government
- They will have a seat at the table where decisions that affect our area are made
- We don't know who the Mayor will be – candidates will be requested to put their names forward before the elections, and they will produce their own manifestos in line with usual election procedures
- Candidates could be from a political party, or they could be an individual with no party affiliation
- Mayors cannot have other political roles such as an MP or councillor

8) What if one council votes 'no'



- Cheshire and Warrington will be removed from the DPP and go to the back of the queue for devolution
- Each council area will miss out on significant funding for transport, bus services, investment in our towns, skills funding, support for business growth etc.
- We will not be prioritised by government for any 'levelling up' type funding
- Cheshire and Warrington would miss out vital additional funding each year
- Eventually, the government will create the Combined Authority by default (ministerial directive) – several years delayed and without our input

9) What is the council's role in the Combined Authority?

- Each council will make up two of the seven constituent members of the Combined Authority's main board/committee
- The elected Mayor will be the other constituent member
- They will also have members on the Scrutiny Committee and Audit and Governance Committee
- Each council, through its members, will have a key role in shaping the policy direction of the Combined Authority, and in making key decisions
- For voting purposes, the councils will have two votes each (six in total) and the Mayor will have one

10) Will the councils still be Unitary Authorities?

- **Yes** – each council will still be a Unitary Authority
- Councillors will have the same functions and responsibilities as they currently have
- The new Combined Authority will focus on regional strategies and policies, and be responsible for setting a Transport Plan for the area
- Individual councils will continue to deliver services for their residents/boroughs

11) What is the scrutiny of the Combined Authority?



- To ensure effective scrutiny of decision making and audit of how resources are used, the Combined Authority will have:
 - At least one Overview and Scrutiny Committee
 - One Audit Committee, in line with the requirements of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009

12) What is double devolution and how can Town and Parish Councils benefit?

- Devolution is about making decision making more local – doing things and deciding things at the appropriate level
- The Combined Authority will focus on sub-regional decisions around economic growth, skills, planning and transport that were previously led by government
- Double devolution is about Town and Parish Councils taking on services and decisions that are currently the responsibility of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, and Warrington Borough Councils
- Double devolution is about starting the conversation on what appetite Town and Parish Councils have for this, and what services and decisions they would be interested in managing

13) What funding will we get?



- The final details are not known yet, but it will include a major, long-term investment in our future
- We will have more information following the government's Spending Review in June
- We could expect a deal worth up to **£20 million a year for 30 years**—like other Combined Authorities
- Plus, devolved budgets for transport, skills, housing and growth
- It will be flexible funding that we control, tailored to local priorities
- It will allow local leaders to plan and make decisions for the long-term, plus the potential to apply for much more

14) What is an 'Established Combined Authority'?

- A Mayoral Combined Authority with a strong track record of delivery and budget management can request access to a deeper level of devolution, including an integrated settlement. This is called an 'Established Combined Authority'
- Criteria for accessing Established Combined Authority:
 - The Combined Authority has been in existence, with a directly elected Mayor in place, for at least 18 months
 - The Combined Authority has a published Local Assurance Framework in place
 - In the previous 18 months, the Combined Authority has not:
 - Been the subject of a Best Value Notice, a MHCLG commissioned independent review, or a statutory inspection or intervention
 - Been subject to any ongoing (or implementing) recommendations from an externally mandated independent review
 - Had material accounting concerns covering the current or previous financial year, which relate to the Strategic Authority's ability to manage public money

15) What is the impact of the financial position of the other councils?

- There is **no** financial impact of any one council's financial performance on another council, or on the new Combined Authority
- The Combined Authority's budget and individual council budgets/debt position are completely separate
- The impact on individual council budgets will be positive in certain areas, as the Combined Authority may commission work from the councils and funds for new economic growth projects will flow into the Combined Authority from government

16) How will devolution benefit rural communities?

- Bringing decision making more local – rural communities will be nearer those making the decisions that affect them, in particular the Mayor of the Combined Authority who will be directly elected by residents
- Businesses based in rural areas or rurally-based business hubs will benefit from the support offered through the Combined authority and Growth Hub
- Businesses in rural areas will be well placed to feed into the Combined Authority around the skills they need across Cheshire and Warrington to support their business growth
- Rural communities will have a strong voice in identifying what improved connectivity will look like for them, including inputting on plans for improved bus services, and initiatives such as Demand Responsive Transport, as well as enhanced local budgets for active travel and highways schemes
- Supporting key sectors to develop, including life sciences and animal life sciences (a key strength for Cheshire and Warrington), advanced manufacturing and visitor economy (which is heavily focussed on our rural areas, diverse market towns, and special rural landscapes)
- The Mayor and Board of the Combined Authority will engage with local communities around the future economic prosperity of our rural areas, and market towns and villages, to ensure economic growth benefits all and is genuinely inclusive
- The Mayor's powers over spatial planning will ensure balanced local neighbourhoods and more housing for families in rural areas to create sustainable communities and high-quality placemaking

17) When will each Full Council consider this?

- We are waiting for government to confirm that we have passed the statutory test following analysis of the consultation responses
- The timeline we are currently working to is:
 - Report on next steps and setting up of the shadow Combined Authority to Joint Committee in July, where a recommendation will be made to the three councils
 - Each council's Full Council will consider this at special meetings in September
- The above is subject to government confirming we have passed the statutory test following analysis of the consultation responses

18) What happens between now and the setting up of the Combined Authority?

- We are awaiting the government's decision to whether we have passed the statutory consultation test, which is expected towards the end of May
- A report providing more detail will be submitted to each council's Full Council meetings in July for a decision
- A 'shadow' Combined Authority would then be set up to develop a shadow organisation to ensure the Combined Authority is ready to operate immediately after the Mayoral election
- Recruitment of key interim staff will be required
- The set-up costs are funded – at no cost to individual councils

19) What consultation will there be with the public?

- We are running a local engagement programme to gather feedback from residents, communities and businesses
- Programme includes:
 - **Community pop-up events** – one in each council area
 - **Community focus groups** – one in each council area
 - **Youth engagement sessions** – one in each council area + potential regional event in partnership with Chester Zoo's Youth Board

20) How will the Mayoral election work?

- Usual election procedures/process
- Government has set **Thursday 7 May 2026** as the election day for Mayoral elections for areas on the DPP
- Candidates can be individuals or representatives of a political party
- Further detail expected – our assumptions are:
 - Candidates will need to submit an intention to stand (circa three to four months before election)
 - Candidates launch their manifestos (eight weeks before election)
 - Pre-election period in place (six weeks before election)

21) Where will the Combined Authority office be?

- Unsure at this time – Cheshire and Warrington is a large geographical area
- An independent evaluation process will be undertaken
- An interim solution may be required

22) Will there be a Mayoral precept for the Combined Authority?

- Not necessarily – this will be for the Combined Authority to decide, should they wish to generate more funding over and above that received from government
- Funding from a precept can only be used for specific purposes/projects
- Out of the current 12 Combined Authorities (including Greater London Authority) – only four have opted for a further Mayoral precept
- For Band D households:
 - Greater London – £171.25 (universal free school meals, crime prevention, homelessness)
 - GMCA – £42.75 (homelessness reduction programme, free bus travel for 16–18-year-olds, public ownership bus company)
 - LCR – £24 (programmes for digital connectivity, tidal energy, bus franchising)
 - Cambridge and Peterborough – £36 (funds 53 bus routes across the area)

23) Is devolution the same as Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)?

- **No** – although included in the White Paper, devolution is completely separate from LGR
- There are no LGR impacts for Cheshire and Warrington
- There are no boundary changes
- There will be no effect on Town and Parish Councils

24) Will each council still have their own Mayor?

- **Yes** – the Combined Authority has no impact on such functions
- Each council will continue to have its own Mayor with civic responsibilities
- A civic Mayor is mainly a ceremonial figure, chosen by council members – they do not have formal powers
- The elected Mayor, chosen by residents through a democratic election process, leads a board with councillors from each council



Any questions?

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